

Strategies of monitoring teaching and learning:

A school management team perspective

By

Nhlanhla Mbuso Mngomezulu

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Supervisor: Dr T.T. Bhengu

ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of School Management Teams (SMTs) in South Africa numerous attempts have been made to improve the role of principals and HODs in classroom activities. In particular because it was observed that SMTs devoted most of their time attending meetings and performing administrative matters such as general policy implementation than monitoring the actual teaching and learning. Literature suggests that schools with effective culture of learning and teaching also have strong instructional leaders who focus on improving the learners' academic achievement. Numerous scholars posit that direct involvement of leaders in teaching and learning activities contributes a major portion to learner success. This study therefore, sought to identify strategies that SMTs utilise to monitor teaching and learning. This qualitative study was conducted in two schools, a primary and a secondary which were purposively sampled. In these schools which are without deputies, principals were also full time subject teachers and also performed clerical duties since schools with small enrolments are rarely allocated support staff. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and HODs. The generated data was analysed using the inductive approach. The findings confirmed that SMTs indeed had strategies of monitoring curriculum implementation but the actual practice was characterised by laxity and lack of decisiveness on the part of the SMTs. Apparently, various contextual factors determined the extent of the implementation of agreed strategies. Finally, recommendations for future research are submitted.

DECLARATION

I, Nhlanhla Mbuso Mngomezulu declare that

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM UKZN



8 March 2015

Mr Mthembu Mbuso Mngomezulu 994862254
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Mngomezulu

Protocol reference number: HSS/0043/015M

Project title: Strategies school leadership utilizes to monitor teaching and learning: Managers' perspective

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 28 January 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol (i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods) must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shemika Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr TT Bheengu
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Mokojele
Cc School Administrator: Mr T Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shemika Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 5050, Durban 4001

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3577/3504/557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4606 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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DEDICATION

Allow me to sing “.....whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say: It is well with my soul”

I wish to thank the Lord almighty who remains the pillar of my strength.

This work is dedicated to my late parents Bhekithemba and Siphiwe Mngomezulu who instilled the culture of widening mental horizons and also to Obala family as well as to Thulasizwe Mngomezulu, my late younger brother who adored engaging in deep research narratives.

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ABBREVIATIONS	
asTTle	Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning
ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EEA	Employment of Educators' Act
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NZ	New Zealand
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools' Act
SET	School-wide Evaluation Tool
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

School managers in South Africa tend to devote most of their time attending meetings and performing administrative matters such as general policy implementation, staffing as well as financial matters and less attention on management of teaching and learning (Bush & Heystek, 2006; Bush & Middlewood, 2013). This is contrary to general views in literature which suggest that direct involvement of leaders in teaching and learning activities contributes a major portion to student success (Robinson, 2007; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010).

Through the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), the Department of Basic Education (DBE) seeks to promote effective teaching and learning in schools by encouraging continuous assessment which is aimed at providing feedback and assure quality (DBE, 2011b) Assessment feedback can assist teachers and learners to plan for future instruction and learning outcomes, respectively. On the same issue, Du Plessis (2013) posits that schools with a good culture of learning and teaching; who also have strong instructional leaders focusing on the improvement of instruction result in positive learning communities. It is assumed that principals and the Heads of Department (HODs) actively involve themselves by monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. However, this assumption on school management team (SMT) practice cannot be assumed to be in place in every school. Apparently, how members of the SMTs monitor instruction needs to be further explored. Given the short background about the need for school managers to focus on instruction and creating a good culture of teaching and learning this study aimed at understanding the manner in which principals and HODs monitored teaching and learning in their schools.

This study focused on school management teams (SMTs) and sought to understand the strategies that they used for monitoring curriculum implementation in the context of applying two leadership concepts. That is instructional and distributed concepts of leadership. Although principals and HODs are tasked with leading and managing, respectively, their activities ought to impact on instruction. Frankly, numerous researchers expect them to be instructional leaders. Bush (2013) posits that instructional leadership focuses on teaching and

learning. Furthermore, SMTs in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (1998) ought to be allocated smaller duty loads in order to attend administrative duties. As a result they cannot be in every class monitoring teaching and learning of all subjects. The challenge of such an attempt could be expertise. Consequently, the expertise of HODs becomes necessary. Therefore, principals as instructional leaders are expected to share or distribute leadership with others, in particular HODs, in an atmosphere of trust. Hence, the study is located within the instructional and distributed leadership concepts. The objective of the study is to explore the leadership practices of SMTs (Principal and HODs) as a product of interacting with each other, entry level teachers and school contexts when monitoring in-class activities. The research reported in this dissertation was a case study that was conducted in two rural schools, comprising a secondary and a primary school, in the Ilembe District.

1.2 Background to the study

In South Africa the job of the principal, as stipulated in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), a section of The Employment of Educators' Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998 is to ensure that the education of learners is promoted (Republic of South Africa, [henceforth, RSA] 1998). In particular, principals are expected to supervise work and performance of staff and regularly meet with relevant structures in order to improve teaching and learning. Furthermore, HODs are expected to provide support to the principal by, *inter alia*, controlling the work of teachers and learners in their departments (RSA, 1998). This policy has often made the general public and scholars of educational leadership to focus, exclusively, on individual roles of the principal and/or the HODs as members of the school management team. However, Spillane (2005) argues that neither the principal nor HODs alone can single-handedly lead schools to greatness. Instead, the focus should be on leadership practices of management teams and not on individual leadership roles.

My informal observations in the Ilembe District, under KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DoE) on how the HODs and school principals perform their respective duties point at fundamental differences in terms of policy interpretation of monitoring curriculum implementation in schools. From an informal personal observation perspective, I have often noted the existence of varying SMT practices. These practices give an impression that the provincial Department of Education has different monitoring policies for each school although this is not necessarily the case. For instance, some secondary school principals only concentrate on National Senior Certificate (NSC) quarterly tests while other classes are

assigned to the HODs, if they are monitored at all. This practice has particularly been observed in small rural schools where the principal and the HODs often wear more than one cap. Principals sometimes play both roles of principal and deputy while the HODs, in addition to their role, perform clerical duties since small rural schools are rarely allocated support staff. It must be noted that in South Africa, promotion posts like that of a deputy principal are allocated to schools according to the school's learner enrolment (RSA, 1998). Schools with low learner enrolment do not qualify for a Deputy Principal post. However, these principals are also expected to perform their duties like any other principal irrespective of whether they have deputies or not; they have to regularly monitor and support classroom activities. In such scenarios, it is not clear as to how they cope with such demands. One wonders how they engage themselves with these tasks.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Concerns are often raised by subject teachers about under-preparedness of the learners in higher grades of every phase, and these concerns raise many questions about the existence or the effectiveness of tools that are used for monitoring. Teachers and members of the SMT often complain about the under-preparedness of learners even though most of those learners had attended lower grades and got promoted within the same school. For instance, you would find a situation where in Grade 10 to Grade 12, known as Further Education and Training (FET) Phase, make-up lessons are usually conducted after school, sometimes during the weekends and even on holidays. This scenario is more intense in Grade 12 classes. These make-up lessons, often referred to as extra lessons, can be construed as admission by the teachers that learners have not been well-prepared in previous grades before Grade 12.

The trailing of learners behind is usually discovered when they are already in Grade 12. This begs the questions as to why the problem of knowledge gap is not discovered in the first few months of Grade 12 or even weeks in the earlier classes like Grade 10, for example. Often principals and HODs submit time tables of 'extra lessons' as their strategy to address knowledge gaps in FET learners. Such make-up lessons form part of schools' turn around strategies to improve learner outcomes, particularly in senior grades of every phase especially in grade 12. However, the question that needs to be posed is: "When do the SMT members become aware of learners who lag behind if work monitoring is conducted regularly in all the grades in the school?" Furthermore, one can ask another question: "What strategies do the

members of the SMT use in monitoring curriculum implementation activities?” It is hoped that answers to these and other questions will be generated.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

As a Circuit Manager, part of my job is to monitor and support principals and HODs as they perform their duties (RSA, 1998). Often principals express their willingness to improve teaching and learning in schools but what is not known is whether or not they have strategies that they use to achieve these goals. The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies that the SMTs implement to monitor teaching and learning, and also to understand what they do with the information that they obtain during monitoring.

Various and sometimes conflicting practices are conducted in schools in the name of monitoring teaching and learning. Some of these practices confirm assertions by scholars such as Bush and Glover (2012); Hoadly, Christie and Ward (2009) who suggest that in some schools monitoring of teaching and learning is not in the principals’ priority list. Such assertions are concerning when considering the findings of a study conducted in Limpopo and Mpumalanga which revealed that indeed teachers spent less time on actual teaching than they are expected (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & Van Rooyen, 2010). This made me wonder whether a similar situation existed in other parts of the country, particularly in the Ilembe District where I worked. These assertions on teaching practices necessitated this study which sought to explore strategies which the SMTs utilised to monitor teaching and learning in schools. Apparently, what is expressed in the policy and what school managers do as individuals, differs from the leadership practice of the principals and the HODs when interacting with teachers and their context. The area which requires considerable attention is inclusive practices of the SMT when conducting monitoring duties as well as whether or not principals and HODs acknowledge that no one person can be everywhere at any one time. The suspicion held is that some principals and HODs accept each day as it comes without formulating strategies, in particular, for monitoring teaching. Hence, the study was not exclusively on individual roles of either principals or HODs. Rather, the focus was on how they perform their monitoring duties working with others. That is, the product of interactions of SMTs, teachers and their context when monitoring curriculum implementation.

1.5 Significance of the study

Hoadly, Christie and Ward (2009) note that considerable research on the topic focuses on theories of what school managers ought to do and not on what school managers actually practice. The assertion by Bush and Middlewood (2013) that the closer school leaders are to teaching and learning activities the better the chances of success for students appears to be a point on which there is consensus among scholars in South Africa and internationally (Fleisch & Safer, 2005; Robinson, 2007; Fleisch, 2008; Bush, 2013). The difference is in what school leaders can do to achieve the desired teaching and learning goals, and also on how leaders can effectively participate in the curriculum monitoring process. The assumption is that principals and their SMTs do set out clear expectations on teaching and learning. Again, this study was not on individual activities of the HODs and/or principals versus policy stipulations. Instead, the significance of the study is that it focused on the integrated leadership practice of SMTs among one another and their subordinates (teachers) in the work situation. In conclusion, the significance of the study was that it focused on SMT strategies and how HODs and principals interacted with other role players in implementing the strategies in school. The findings of the study can assist researchers in school leadership as well as SMTs to improve strategies of monitoring curriculum implementation in order to enhance teaching and learning and consequently learner performance.

1.6 Objectives of the study

There is considerable research (Hoadly, Christie & Ward, 2009; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & Van Rooyen, 2010; Bush, 2013; Bush & Middlewood, 2013) suggesting that studies in monitoring of teaching and learning in school focuses on theories and not on the actual practice. The study sought to unearth techniques and instruments which are utilised regularly when monitoring teaching and learning. Furthermore, the experiences and attitudes of SMTs towards monitoring were also vital to establish. Lastly, the study intended to establish reasons for SMTs to choose the strategies and approaches they used. An attempt was made to focus on distributed instructional leadership practice of monitoring teaching and learning by SMT. Spillane (2005) argues that neither individual principals nor HODs can single-handedly lead schools to success. The tendency to focus on either the school principals or the HODs tends to place the responsibility of monitoring teaching and learning exclusively on one of these, in most cases, the HODs (Spillane, 2005; Lambert, 2015). Consequently, the principals gradually become distant leaders that are exonerated from actively participating in daily classroom activities. As a result they are inclined not to be conversant with classroom

developments. The objective of this study was to focus on the integrated leadership practice of the principal, the HODs, teachers and their context as they monitor curriculum implementation. Specifically, the objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To explore strategies and possibly, instruments which principals and HODs used when monitoring teaching and learning.
2. To establish SMT experiences of and possibly, attitudes they held towards monitoring teaching and learning.
3. To determine the rationale which managers had for monitoring curriculum implementation in the manner they did and establish SMT understanding of strategies they utilised.

1.7 Critical questions

In order to explore the SMT strategies and possibly the experiences and attitudes of the principals and the HODs the following questions were crafted:

1. What strategies do the School Management Team members utilise to monitor teaching and learning?
2. What are the School Management Team members' experiences of monitoring teaching and learning?
3. Why do the School Management Team members monitor teaching and learning in the way they do?

1.8 Clarification of key terms

I thought that it is necessary that key terms that characterise the study are briefly discussed in this section. The first term is school management team (SMT) which refers to the school principal, deputy and HODs. In the policy documents of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa, 'SMT' refers to school principal, deputies and HODs (RSA, 1996b). However, loosely used, the acronym 'SMT' often used in school corridors and outside school premises tends to efface the principals and foreground heads of department (HOD). Therefore, in order to avoid confusion that might result from misconceptions associated with SMT, it must be emphasised that the principal is an integral part of the SMT and, like the HODs; the principal is expected to perform the task of monitoring teaching and learning

(RSA, 1996c). This is in no way an attempt to suggest that other people, for instance teachers outside the SMT cannot be approached to perform management roles where need arises.

In this study the concepts of leadership and management are loosely used to refer to principals and HODs. It is acknowledged that theoretically these concepts are often distinguished. For instance, Harris and Chapman (2002) present leadership as the process of enlisting and channelling the talents and energies of teachers, pupils and parents toward achieving common educational goals. However, management, though not completely distinct from leadership, it is characterised by management functions such as planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling an institution in order to accomplish set goals (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Since the SMTs often do both depending on the context, it must be pointed out that reference to principals and HODs as managers and sometimes as leaders in the discourse emanates from the interrelated nature of the concepts.

The study focused on how the SMTs involved themselves in classroom activities through monitoring teaching and learning. Monitoring instruction is understood to involve classroom visits, observing teachers at work and providing them with feedback and support (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & Van Rooyen, 2010). Briefly, the principal and the HODs are seen as instructional leaders. Since the SMTs were not expected to unilaterally perform this task alone, the expectation was that the SMTs interact with one another in their context in order to effectively monitor curriculum implementation (Bhengu & Gounder, 2014). In addition to being instructional leaders, the SMTs were expected to work with others in a distributed leadership fashion hence this study is located within these two concepts of leadership. The concept of distributed leadership is used in an inclusive sense borrowed from Spillane (2005). Presenting some aspects of this concept Bhengu and Gounder (2014) argue that the concept of distributed leadership can be used to include everybody within the school who can wield influence in shaping the atmosphere of instruction. This view is in line with this study which focuses mainly on initiatives of the principals and the HODs as they attempt to monitor teaching and learning.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in two rural schools, one primary with one HOD and a secondary with two HODs. Two schools, instead of one, were chosen in order to broaden views by

having primary and secondary school perspectives while also increasing the number of participants.

1.10 Outline of the study

This study is made up of five chapters and they are briefly outlined below.

Chapter One

This chapter introduces the study and makes a case for the study to be undertaken. The chapter specifically outlines the broad context of teaching and learning monitoring and also provides the background of the study; statement of the problem; purpose and rationale of the study; significance of the study; objectives of the study; critical questions; clarification of terms; delimitations and concludes with a chapter summary.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the literature that was reviewed in order to get theoretical perspectives surrounding the problem that underpins the study. Both the international and the local debates around the topic are presented. Then a comprehensive thematic discussion of concepts and previous research which informed the study on strategies of monitoring teaching and learning in school is provided.

Chapter Three

The chapter focuses on the design and methodology that was used in conducting the study. The chapter includes the discussion about research instruments used during the research. The procedure for selecting participants is also discussed as well as the ethical issues pertinent to the study. Techniques for generating data are presented and the framework for ensuring trustworthiness of the findings is discussed.

Chapter Four

In this chapter I present and discuss data obtained from participants who consisted of school principals and the HODs. The generated data is then analysed and emerging patterns presented. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Five

The fifth chapter presents the findings that are drawn from the data that is presented in Chapter Four. However, this chapter begins with a summary of the entire study and then moves on to present and discuss the findings. Thereafter, recommendations are made. In conclusion, some kind of an evaluation is made about the extent to which the questions that underpinned the study were adequately answered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the purpose and the background of the study were discussed. The rationale for the study was also presented. The three critical research questions guiding the study were also presented. An overview of specific research methods and techniques of generating data was presented. The main purpose of Chapter One was to introduce the study while providing the reader with the direction on how the report will unfold. In this chapter, the literature which is related to the SMT strategies of monitoring teaching and learning is reviewed. The literature review presents both the national and international perspectives on the topic. The main purpose of this chapter is to gain insights on how the principals and the HODs as instructional leaders interact with other stakeholders in monitoring teaching and learning. Towards the end, the chapter also presents the conceptual framework underpinning the study.

The literature is presented first in order to acknowledge the kinds of debates on the topic while positioning the current study within the appropriate conceptual framework as well as the justification for selecting the concepts. The discussion of literature is done under the subtopics: Mandates for monitoring; Conceptualisation of monitoring; Significance of monitoring; Strategies of monitoring; Mixed bag of monitoring challenges; Research conducted on related topics; Conceptual Framework. In the discussion international, local and sometimes sub-Saharan perspectives are presented in order to share views from countries in almost similar contexts as an attempt to balance the debate.

2.2 Mandates for monitoring

International mandates such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations, in particular Goal Two, provide a mandate to countries to improve the level of education of boys and girls worldwide by ensuring that they complete a full course of primary education (UNESCO, 2007). These MDGs find expression locally in a number of pieces of legislation such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a), South African Schools' Act [Hereafter, the Schools Act], (RSA, 1996b), Employment of

Educators' Act (EEA) (RSA, 1998) and other agreements within the Department of Education.

Locally, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 seeks, among other goals, to improve the quality of life of citizens through freeing the potential of every person (RSA, 1996a). Arguably, education is a single weapon through which this aspiration can be attained. Hence, out of the five priorities of the current South African government, education comes first. Legislations guiding schools in endeavours to attain these goals include the Schools Act.

The preamble of the Schools Act states that its aim is to provide education of high quality to all learners in order to make a contribution towards the economic well-being of society and consequently, the eradication of poverty (RSA, 1996b). It can also be argued that putting education ahead of all other priorities is a significant approach in which the government expresses its seriousness about adhering to international aspirations like the MDGs. The main assumption is that quality education can enhance achievement of other goals including minimisation of poverty. Education is conducted through teaching, learning and assessment (Gamlem & Smith, 2013). These aspects are effectively implemented when constant monitoring takes place. Monitoring of teaching and learning is regarded as a significant leadership aspect of locating weaknesses within the process in order to improve instruction and learner performance (Bush, 2011; Du Plessis, 2013). In this regard the members of the SMT are guided by the Employment of Educators' Act (EEA), No. 76 of 1998 (RSA, 1998).

According to the EEA, the principal is tasked with ensuring that the education of learners is promoted (RSA, 1998). In particular, school principals are expected to supervise the work and performance of staff and to regularly meet with relevant structures in order to improve teaching and learning. On the other hand, heads of department (HODs) are expected to provide support to the principal by, *inter alia*, controlling the work of teachers and learners in their departments. Briefly, school principals, the deputies and the HODs are expected to be at the centre of teaching and learning in various ways and monitoring curriculum implementation is one aspect of becoming actively involved (RSA, 1998).

Subscribing to these local and indirectly international intentions is an attempt to drastically reduce the number of learners who drop out of school before completing at least primary

school education. Strategies of monitoring teaching and learning are an approach that can be used, among other things, to assess progress in curriculum implementation. In line with the MDGs monitoring can be used to establish challenges in teaching and learning that might be associated with failure rate and causes of school dropouts (UNESCO, 2007). Therefore, it is assumed that at school leadership level locally, the principal and the HODs subscribe to these international endeavours to eliminate school dropouts. SMTs can be expected to put most of their efforts towards attaining these goals.

Direct involvement of the SMTs in classroom activities is informed by the National Protocol for Assessment which is used to verify the progress made by teachers and learners in teaching and learning processes (DBE, 2011c). This document provides a framework for the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting classroom information in order to improve learner performance. Furthermore, in terms of the Collective Agreement 8 of 2003, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) document, school principals and the HODs are expected, as part of their duties, to set clear expectations of their learners and teachers, do regular class visits and provide feedback (Department of Education, 2003). Consequently, all public schools in South Africa are expected to submit teacher scores towards the end of the year so that 1% salary increase can apply the following year to all teachers whose scores meet the required minimum standards.

In some schools, the IQMS occurs as some form of a monitoring device (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Teachers' scores are compiled through various performance standards of which some require class visits. It can be argued that if the school principals and the HODs generate scores according to the stipulations of the Collective Agreement 8, the majority of the teachers should, currently, be familiar and also be supportive of all IQMS processes. Therefore, school leaders need not fear resistance from the teachers when monitoring work including class visits since stakeholders in education including teacher unions are signatories to the Collective Agreement (DoE, 2003).

The literature reviews suggest that there is a growing body of research in support for direct involvement of SMT, particularly the principal teaching and learning in the classroom (Southworth, 2004; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010; Bush & Middlewood, 2013, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). Contrary to the tendency mentioned in Chapter One which is apportioned particularly to school principals wherein most of the SMT time is devoted to

administrative duties, Bush (2011) posits that school leadership ought to place teaching and learning at the top of their priority list by systematically directing their influence to classroom activities. Further, Bush (2013) posits that the influence of strong leadership is often directed at student learning via teachers. Southworth (2004) argues that school leadership is stronger when it is informed by data on learners' learning progress and achievements as well as by direct knowledge of teaching practices and classroom dynamics. Monitoring teachers' and learners' work is an aspect where intervention by the principal and the HODs can be used to enhance classroom gains, improve literacy levels and indirectly contribute towards the alleviation of poverty (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & Van Rooyen, 2010).

2.3 Conceptualisation of monitoring

The concept of monitoring is applied hand in hand with other concepts such as evaluation and assessment (Clark, 2007). Brief clarity on these concepts is necessary to justify the understanding of monitoring as is discussed in the study. Hardie (1998) emphasises that monitoring and evaluation are two distinguishable concepts which are often used inseparably as they tend to inform each other. Further, Hardie (1998) argues that monitoring is understood to answer the question; how are we doing? It involves looking and checking without making value judgements or taking any action. On the other hand, evaluation answers the questions; did we achieve what we set out to achieve? If not, why? Evaluation often draws on information gathered through the monitoring process. In addition, evaluation is used to select appropriate strategies and to assess progress achieved (Hardie, 1998). This study sought to understand how the principals and the HODs monitored teaching and learning. In an attempt to apply these concepts, the Department of Basic Education sees curriculum monitoring as the generation of information on teaching and learning which is sometimes conducted through the strategy of evaluating or assessing progress in teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2010c). Monitoring is often conducted through assessment. Hence, in Section 2.8.1 of Chapter Two assessment is discussed as a monitoring strategy.

Some similarities in international and local views are espoused on monitoring as an approach of establishing whether the set expectations are being met or not. Bush and Glover (2012) conceptualise monitoring as an ongoing process undertaken in order to establish whether teaching and learning are taking place as expected or not. In the United Kingdom (UK) for instance, Southworth (2004) focuses on strategies when he posits that monitoring involves

visiting classrooms, observing teachers at work and providing them with feedback. Further, Southworth (2004) argues that such function is widely distributed among the HODs, the deputies and also the principals. Implicitly, monitoring is not the preserve of the HODs as subject specialists. This view is echoed by the findings made in the study, to be discussed in Chapter Five, and also by the study conducted in Limpopo and Mpumalanga schools in South Africa. In the latter study Bush, Joubert, *et al.* (2010) report that the HODs indeed checked educators' portfolios and workbooks as well as the learners' work to validate educator's claims. Principals, in addition to reviewing the work of the HODs, also checked the learners' books, directly. Indeed, there is a growing body of evidence from studies in support of the SMTs getting involved in classroom activities through continuous monitoring.

2.4 Significance of monitoring

Bush (2013) posits that the purpose of schooling is to promote teaching and learning. Like any other formal classroom activity, teaching and learning must be monitored in order to obtain feedback on its specific impacts to learning. It can also be argued that teaching is effective when learning takes place. Consequently, the SMTs can declare teaching as effective after close monitoring has been conducted. In this section numerous reasons pointing at the significance of monitoring are presented.

Du Plessis (2013) concedes that monitoring of curriculum implementation assists managers to learn about the needs of the learners and obstacles encountered by the teachers and *vice versa*. Apparently, teaching and the monitoring thereof is intended to enhance learning. Thus, Bush (2011) comments that the use of the term learner in South Africa illustrates what schools ought to achieve, that is, promoting lifelong learning in communities, starting from entry level grades. Arguing in favour of monitoring, Southworth (2004) concedes that leadership is stronger when it is backed by data on teaching and learning practices, achievements and other classroom dynamics. Monitoring can inform the leadership about the needs of the learners and challenges that teachers experience (Du Plessis, 2013). It is not unfair to expect the SMTs to be specifically involved in teaching and learning activities.

Olayiwola (2012) maintains that the co-function of the SMTs is to be instructional leaders. That is, the teachers irrespective of their position in the hierarchy, their main role is to enhance learning. It is often argued that instructional leaders are better placed to impact on classroom activities (Harris & Frost, 2010). If the SMTs are expected to set expectations on

teaching and learning as part of their duties then part of their duty is also monitoring of those classroom expectations. Monitoring is necessary in ensuring achievement of set expectations (Bush & Glover, 2012). Du Plessis (2013) claims that monitoring teaching and learning provides effective feedback and can lead to specific professional development efforts and enhance performance. This claim suggests that concerns expressed by Ilembe managers, presented in Chapter One, on learners who are discovered in classes for which they are under-prepared, including Grade 12, can be identified timeously before they progress to the next grades through monitoring of teaching and learning. Arguably, monitoring can be used to identify the gaps in both teaching and learning and thereafter formulate turnaround improvement plans as is the case in IQMS implementation (DBE, 2003; Safer & Fleischman, 2005). Numerous researchers are in agreement with this view arguing that assessment followed by feedback can result in improved learner performance (Hattie & Gan, 2011; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Du Plessis, 2013).

Though there may be consensus on the views espoused on instructional leadership role of the SMT but the actual concept 'instructional' triggers some disagreements. For instance, Lambert (2013) discredits the concept of instructional leadership pointing at its focus on teachers to the total exclusion of learners as a major drawback. Actually, instruction is an activity that can be expected to characterise all teachers (Lambert, 2013). To some, reference to instruction seems to suggest that more attention is paid to teaching than it is on learning. For instance, Lambert (2013) argues that the concept of instructional leadership, particularly when referring to the principal as instructional, portrays images of someone prevailing over the whole school and somehow overshadowing all other managers including, for instance, the HODs who are middle managers.

Contrary to this view, Bush (2013) presents the phrase 'management of teaching and learning' (MTL) often used in South Africa. The phrase presents both teaching and learning as equally important aspects of curriculum management. Similarly, in this study, the principal is assumed to be involved with both teaching (instruction) which goes together with learning. While both the principal and the HODs are regarded as instructional leaders in this study, the term is used to emphasise the SMT role in class but not to exclude teachers from this role.

In this study the SMTs are not seen as only wielding positional authority over all other teachers. Rather they are seen to be actively involved in teaching and learning working with

others. Instructional leaders who operate in shared or distributed leadership terrain. Their leadership of instruction is seen as a product of interaction with others in context (Bhengu & Gounder, 2014). The concept of SMT monitoring on teaching and learning focuses on the interaction among the principals and HODs as they perform this task.

2.5 How to manage monitoring

While the practice of supervising or monitoring processes has recently been adopted in the public sector, particularly in education, it has long been the main pillar of production in the business world (Owen, 2001). In the United States of America (USA), Sullivan and Glanz (2005, p.41) quote Spears stating that “supervision is and always will be the key to high instructional standards of America’s public schools.” Indeed monitoring can be significant to different stakeholders in various situations including teaching and learning situations. In order to foster quality teaching and learning, Henard and Roseveare (2012) present three levels to be acknowledged by the SMT members and other practitioners in education in order to effectively perform management duties including monitoring, and these are school level, programme level and individual level endeavours.

First, in order to manage at a school level, the involvement of leaders is supported by clearly drawn policies which back internal quality assurance systems. Policies are guidelines which are often followed by managers in order to perform planned tasks. Furthermore, to ensure operational effectiveness leaders often use policies as their strategies (Lock, Qin & Brause, 2007). Almost every task to be executed in school must be done in accordance with clearly drawn procedure or policy to be followed (Clark, 2007). Policies drawn in order to execute and/or monitor the execution of these tasks include, but are not limited to, learner admission, attendance, homework, staff duty load allocation, assessment (Du Plessis, 2013).

In some instances a comprehensive set of planning and policy documents form part of effective management. Clark (2007) warns that policy documents alone do not promote effective management. Instead, Clark (2007) argues that they simply set out expectations about the way things should be done. This warning should be noted as an eye opener suggesting that school leadership ought to develop vision for school and set clear expectations of learners and teachers (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010). It is assumed that managers in schools do set aside time to plan, draw budgets, allocate duties to staff and create expectations and draw sequences of events. The school policy is an enormous

document inclusive of all specific monitoring procedures in subject and classroom policies which presumably, school leaders prepare jointly with other teachers and are used as guides to be followed by all in school.

Secondly, the programme level refers to monitoring of content and the delivery of the programmes in classrooms. The Department of Basic Education in the form of CAPS documents stipulates that learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans prescribe specific levels of planning and for each one of the eight learning areas (DBE, 2011a). These levels of teacher planning which are presented can be expected from managers as levels of monitoring. For instance, planning for monitoring can be informed by expected levels of teachers' planning. The third section of each one of the three CAPS documents outlines the principles and guidelines for assessment and also makes suggestions for recording and reporting (DBE, 2011a, b, c). If followed, these measures can be used as areas where monitoring implementation is most plausible. The school principals and the HODs can be expected to effectively involve themselves in this regard.

Finally, school leaders are supportive of individual teacher's initiatives to improve learning. This individual level approach also promotes learner oriented focus. Support for quality instruction (teaching) enhances learning (Henard & Roseveare, 2012) and as a consequence, promotes learner performance. For instruction to be of high quality, like other valuable products in the cooperate world (Owen, 2001), management must closely monitor teachers' work and other classroom learning initiatives.

2.6 Identification of monitoring needs and challenges

At this stage the important question, however, is about determining how the principals, for instance, would know if their school is successful or not. It is also important that they establish the needs or challenges in three or even five years' time. They can achieve this task by clearly defining stages and significant points of the implementation strategy and articulate them to the followers in simple terms. Effective leaders translate strategies into action and then monitor processes involved (Owen, 2001; Davis & Davis, 2012). Davis and Davis (2012) further argue that it is a wish of every successful leader that followers understand and hopefully internalise the significant stages of the task to be performed.

Identifying the needs and the challenges calls for the establishment of criteria and appropriate measures to monitor and evaluate whether the set targets have been met (Davis & Davis, 2012). For instance, in order to determine whether the teachers give the learners adequate written work, mark it and give feedback on time, the SMT may have to randomly select a few learner exercise books from each class to check the frequency of written work given and the feedback written to learners. School leadership could regularly conduct this exercise continuously throughout the year (DBE, 2011a, c). In the process, leadership obtains an opportunity to appreciate strengths, identify needs and challenges for which they can develop strategies to improve. By so-doing leadership would be wielding influence to attain change in the form of enhancing the desired goals, in this case, enhanced teaching and learning.

2.7 Monitoring for accountability

More often, managers are increasingly called upon to account to stakeholders who are involved in the education which their institutions provide (RSA, 2011a). Stakeholders may range from national governments who are signatories to international agreements down to parents and learners at a local level (Middlewood & Lumby, 2012). Parents have a greater influence in determining which school their children will attend. Schools that intend to attract larger volumes of learners may have to yield to demands of parents. Quality teaching and learning is a criterion often considered by some parents when making school choice (Mthiyane & Bhengu, 2012). In the United Kingdom (UK), notions of quality and accountability in education are of significance and are used to subject schools, colleges and universities to rigorous scrutiny (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2011). As a consequence, huge focus is given to monitoring themes such as managing staff and resources, leadership for high-quality teaching and learning.

Evaluation and review is also conducted in order to retain or improve relationship with stakeholders in school. Schools with a reputation of less teaching commitment while also producing learner performance of low quality in Kenya were reported to be more likely to experience a decline in enrolment (Olayiwola, 2012). In terms of Section 34(1) of the Schools Act, the budget of a public school is, in addition to poverty related variables, determined such that it is proportional to the learner enrolment (RSA, 1996b). The school which experiences decline in resources as a result of insufficient funding can consequently experience decline in a variety of other criteria including learner enrolment (Mthiyane & Bhengu, 2012). High duty loads due to post provisioning norms allocating fewer teachers to schools with low enrolment

can negatively affect learner performance. Finally, the end results may be closure of a school (Msila, 2011; Mthiyane & Bhengu, 2012). Arguably, these negative consequences can be attributed to poor or complete lack of accountability and regular reporting to relevant stakeholders, partly.

Furthermore, the SMT members ought to consider carefully their accountability to a wide range of stakeholders (Archer & Brown, 2013) whose views and perceptions about the institutions they manage can impact on their very existence. Monitoring of teaching and learning with the intention to review the key purposes, identifying opportunities and challenges is significant in order to realign goals (Middlewood & Lumby, 2012). The ability to foresee the future direction of teaching and learning in order to identify and hold onto effective tendencies is of paramount importance. Effective monitoring can assist in identification of teaching and learning challenges so that they can be addressed timely (Bush & Glover, 2012). Further, surprises of finding learners who are ill-prepared to be in those grades only when they have been registered in those grades as presented in Chapter One, can be arrested. Teacher energies can be directed towards producing high quality teaching and learning through effective monitoring. 'Extra lessons' often organised for all the learners in preparation for Annual National Assessment or NSC examinations can be arranged for fewer learners who may have been identified to need them for various reasons. Blanket catch up lessons which address the tendency of lagging behind can be turned into a thing of the past.

2.8 Strategies of monitoring

There is a growing body of evidence which points at the significance of the concept of monitoring in education (Bush, et al., 2010; Supovitz, Siriniders & May, 2010; Archer & Brown, 2013; Gamlem & Smith, 2013). The difference arises in strategies that can be applied considering that leaders can attach different levels of significance to various strategies of monitoring. The discussion of monitoring strategies in this study is conducted under the subtopics: assessment; feedback; school programmes and monitoring instruments; human resource development.

2.8.1 Assessment

Assessment as a strategy of monitoring teaching and learning can provide information to leadership and other stakeholders to make informed decisions (Southworth, 2004; Bush & Glover, 2012). There is consensus among scholars (Southworth, 2004; Du Plessis, 2013) that

monitoring involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data depicting classroom situations. Locally, the Department of Education through the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2011c) stipulates that all classroom activities must be recorded, analysed and interpreted to assist learners, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about progress of learners (DBE, 2011c). This definition of assessment indicates the significance of assessment as a monitoring strategy.

Assessment directed at obtaining learning progress can indirectly give information on teaching. The DBE (2011b) gives further clarity on monitoring when stipulating that it should provide an indication of learner progress and achievement in the most effective and efficient manner. It is, further, asserted that adequate evidence of achievement ought to be collected in various forms of assessment in order to enhance learning experience (DBE, 2011b, c). Implicitly, assessment as a strategy of monitoring can be conducted to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

According to CAPS documents (DBE, 2011a, b), learners' performance must be recorded and reports communicated to the learners and other relevant stakeholders. Recorded information should inform the teachers, the SMT members and other stakeholders about learner performance. The main purpose of recorded information, however, is to provide regular feedback to learners. The learner scores reflecting performance should be obtainable from the teacher files which are obtainable from teachers on request at all times for accountability and moderation purposes (DBE, 2011c). Teacher files are indirectly used to verify the progress made by teachers and learners in teaching and learning, respectively. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether school management has internalised and took ownership of monitoring work. Informal observations made in the Ilembe District which were presented in Chapter One suggest laxity of the SMT members' monitoring conducted to appease the Departmental officials. The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is beginning to be a wake-up call for managers to be involved in instruction. Serious monitoring appears to be conducted only in Grade 12 classes in preparation for the final secondary school examination. In this regard, a comparison with New Zealand, a country with similar situations like South Africa can provide clarifying perspectives.

New Zealand and South Africa, among other respects, share an assessment philosophy framework which encourages assessment for learning. In South Africa, the National

Curriculum Statement (NCS) embraces assessment for monitoring and reporting and also as a driving force for learning with the ultimate goal of assisting learners to make judgements about their own performance (DBE, 2011b). The initial part of monitoring and reporting is a significant reminder to school leadership about their management roles. The emphasis of monitoring is on feedback to the learners after assessment in order to enhance the learning experience thus guides further learning. In addition, the Protocol for Assessment calls for the use of recorded data for feedback to the learners, the parents, the teachers and other stakeholders, in order to plan for teaching and learning activities as well as other interventions deemed necessary (DBE, 2011c).

On the other hand, New Zealand, in order to ensure quality, participates in national while emphasising school-based assessments in education as part of its system of monitoring. The government has invested immensely in advanced computer technology in order to ease the effects of compulsory national testing (Archer & Brown, 2013). Furthermore, Archer and Brown (2013) who explored New Zealand assessment framework, note that the government of New Zealand realised that monitoring learning activities can be cumbersome to both the teachers and school leadership. Through the Ministry of Education's Strategic Policy the government has developed a toolkit, named the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning software abbreviated as AsTTle. As the name suggests this toolkit is aimed at providing support to teaching and learning and is carried through advanced electronic software systems. These measures facilitate and ease possibilities of regular assessment and quicker feedback at a school level.

Although New Zealand as a country participates in national and international assessments to ensure quality but their system is firmly entrenched in school based assessments. At school level in New Zealand, more often feedback to the stakeholders is ongoing and public comments are encouraged. This creates an increased climate of trust, confidence and competence in which national monitoring purposes are supported by school-based assessments which are clearly evident in the daily lives of teachers (Archer & Brown, 2013), contrary to the South African situation where the SMT members tend to monitor in preparation for national assessments, for instance the NSC examination or ANA. In spite of the levels of economic developments in these two countries, New Zealand being a developed country while South Africa is a developing one but there are lessons to be noted for the New Zealand approach. However, infrastructural challenges in South Africa cannot be overlooked

although these countries both encourage assessment in education as part of the monitoring and quality assurance strategy.

2.8.2 Feedback

It can be argued that assessment without constructive feedback can be a futile exercise. The power of feedback lies not only on when and how it is given but also more in when and how it is received (Hattie & Gan, 2011). On this issue, Gamlem and Smith (2013) note that some written or verbal comments which teachers often make to learners as feedback on work done can be so negative that learner's performance can be negatively impacted. For instance, it is not uncommon for learners to be told that they could have done a better job while on one hand learners feel they had given their best attempt to the task. Sometimes teachers, based on learner scores, simply inform learners to work harder in future, not realising that learner scores can be low even when tremendous efforts were made to do even better (Hattie & Gan, 2011). It has been observed that learners perceive such feedback as negative and discouraging (Gamlem & Smith, 2013). Blanket feedback suggesting that learners did not do enough can elicit undesirable attitude from the learners. The monitoring of classroom practices by leadership can be vital in preventing unintended negative feedback. Instead, positive feedback can be encouraged among teachers. Positive assessment feedback is described by students as feedback that gives approval to performance, achievement or effort and specifies what can be done to improve work (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2011). Gamlem and Smith (2013) also claim that research indicates that formative feedback tends to promote learning and achievement. For an example, they mention praise related to task as having a potential of raising motivation, effort and performance. Therefore, managers cannot be expected to quickly glide over learner books and be excited when up-to-date tick marks are observed. Instead, it is advisable that the principals and the HODs also concern themselves with contents of the remarks made about classroom activities so as to encourage feedback that can contribute to improved learner performance, as presented earlier. The next section deals specifically with school-based programmes aimed at enhancing monitoring teaching and learning.

2.8.3 School Programmes and Monitoring Instruments

Almost every school activity ought to be part of a school programme drawn for the purpose of attaining certain goals (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). Teaching, sporting activities, assessment are some of the activities often found in school programmes. Assessment

discussed above as a monitoring strategy, can also be an example of an item to be included as part of a major school programme in which all subject notional times are scheduled as stipulated in National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b). For instance, each subject must have dates on which some of the measurement will be conducted and the composite scheduling of subject evaluation dates constitutes a school assessment programme (DBE, 2010a). There are numerous programmes in school which are drawn to achieve certain goals. Some of these goals are to conduct orderly morning assembly, examination invigilation, teaching and monitoring, extra-curricular as well as other regular activities (Bush, 2013). In order to ensure quality implementation of these activities monitoring instruments for each one is necessary.

When conducting written subject assessment, first, the question paper is submitted to the HOD or specialist teacher for moderation as a quality assuring measure way before it is given to the learners (DBE, 2011b). Instruments designed for assessment moderation are designed to check content coverage, level of difficulty, distribution of question type, grammar. Each programme has to have specific instruments to monitor its effective implementation. During management of teaching and learning, monitoring instruments or tools are also used to monitor numerous activities. These include learner and/or teacher attendance, daily preparation, marking of learner books, work completion, late arrival or early departure and so forth. Each one of these has its own specific monitoring tool. Van Joolingen (1999) describes cognitive tools that can be designed by teacher leaders to enhance the learning process. These instruments are like a flow chart with steps that are followed in order to understand/learn or solve a problem. Such tools are commonly used to ease learning and/or discovery (Van Joolingen, 1999).

Monitoring instruments are not the monopoly of the learners in the classroom. They are often used in management as a means of identifying and creatively solving problems (Neumann, Jones & Webb, 2012). Periodic register is an example of a monitoring instrument used to monitor the honouring of teaching/learning during allocated times. In the process, specific teacher academic activities are closely monitored and feed-back as well as corrective measures given timely. Often monitoring tools enhance an informed decision-making culture of the institution. Furthermore, instruments can promote a teaching environment in which learning experience is promoted (Van Joolingen, 1999). In the USA the use of school-wide evaluation tool (SET) in schools is vigorously encouraged in order to document a wide range

of positive learning procedures (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Bolland, 2004). The SET is aimed at analysing the relationship between the utilisation of the procedures and changes in social and academic behaviour. Conclusions reached on the effectiveness of the tool suggest the reliability of using school-wide evaluation tools as a measure of teaching and other technical efforts in schools (Horner, et al., 2004).

Therefore, utilisation of SET is not merely meant to gather information on learners and learning procedures. It is also a measure of assessing the teaching that is taking place in a school. From such data suggestions on teacher development can easily be made by principals and SMTs after receiving feedback. Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2010) note that school principals and the SMTs in South Africa are often short of clear systems to monitor and manage curriculum implementation. These scholars further argue that instead of assessing the quality of teaching and learning taking place in school, they confine most of their attention to checking work completion (Bush, *et. al.*, 2010). In order to overcome the situation, essential tools for managing teaching and learning which include monitoring and evaluation tools are recommended (Van Joolingen, 1999; Bush, et al., 2010).

The strategy of utilising monitoring and evaluation tools assist the teachers and the SMTs to adjust teaching approaches where such a challenge is identified (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). For instance, teachers may design tools in order to identify learner challenges. But Safer and Fleischman (2005) further argue that other learner challenges may be a result of weaknesses on the part of the teachers' approach. In such instances the teacher has to improve or change strategies or even consider personal development. This strategy can apply to both management levels and entry level teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2013). Monitoring instruments are designed to gather data at regular intervals. The interval of the data gathering varies; sometimes it is daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or even quarterly (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). Monitoring at regular intervals enables managers to better schedule their work as well as improve quality and efficiency (Lock, Qin & Brause, 2007). Data analysis gathered during these intervals is significant to give regular feedback so that necessary intervention strategies can be undertaken. In school settings, scholars such as Gamlem and Smith (2013) suggest areas in which teaching and learning can be managed through the utilisation of monitoring instruments. These include, but are not limited to, curriculum management, student assessment and other activities like attendance, timetable, staff activities and curriculum implementation. The next section focuses on the issue of developing

human capital as a strategy that can help enhance the quality of teaching and learning environment.

2.8.4 Strategy of Developing Human Resource

The learners' academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs are rapidly becoming diverse and complex (Newmann, Jones & Webb, 2012). Consequently, Newmann, Jones and Webb (2012) posit that the results are high demands for dynamic teacher leaders who can cope with a variety of classroom situations. The current flattened setting of the teaching profession in which teachers' responsibilities remain the same from the first day of their appointment until retirement provides no significant solution to learner needs and other diverse challenges requiring new teaching strategies in schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2012). Few teachers who are promoted to management positions are merely there to rubber stamp the principal's positions (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012). In the absence of the principal very little creativity can occur. As a result the development of teacher leadership is more significant now than at any other time (Hunzicker, 2012). Human resource development as a strategy of enhancing work monitoring can be conducted to target both at teacher level and management level. The discussions are therefore, conducted under topics: Teacher development strategy and Leadership development strategy.

2.8.4.1 Teacher Development Strategy

York-Barr and Duke (2004) define teacher leadership as a process by which teachers, individually and collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and members of the community to improve teaching and learning practices in order to improve learning outcomes. Leadership is about influencing others (Poekert, 2012). This definition suggests that teacher leadership and the wielding of influence are jointly meant to achieve desired outcomes. In a school situation the desired outcomes include improving learner performance. Apparently, the key concept associated with leadership is influence. Teacher development need is often observed in various scenarios in school. Circuit managers once visited a school three months before the end-of-the-year final examination commenced. The aim of the visit was to monitor the state of readiness for the November examination, expecting to find special revision time tables, especially for Grade 12 classes, as well as the actual examination time table for all other grades. In terms of the educator post establishment the school was not entitled to the deputy principal position and had only one HOD post (KZN DoE, 2015). The school relied on the HOD leadership to draw the examination management plan. They were

shocked when the HOD informed them that they had not drawn the time tables because the principal was on sick leave until October. The HOD shared almost everything on how they operate on day-to-day basis. Apparently, the HOD saw nothing wrong in waiting for the principal who was on leave to issue approval of drawing necessary time schedules. It was also noted that management policies often shared in monthly principals' meetings were not adhered to and were not mentioned at any point in time during discussions with the HOD. In fact, the HOD did not indicate even in a single sentence that the principal shared with the SMT deliberations from monthly meetings. Circuit managers had hoped that the HOD would talk about sharing of duties as part of distributed leadership commonly discussed those days. Nonetheless, it was concluded that empowerment of the HODs to become part of leadership was severely lacking in that school. The school was still only led by the principal to the total exclusion of other teachers. What made the situation even worse was that the HOD, a fully-fledged member of the SMT, had to postpone taking crucial decisions and wait for the principal who was on leave. One-person show is one of many examples of management styles which exclude teachers from practising leadership in some schools.

In order to avoid the recurrence of such a scenario, it is plausible to expect teachers to meet regularly in order to make crucial leadership decisions that can improve daily school routines. For instance, if the school quarterly calendar had been drawn in collaboration with other teachers, the decision of the HOD to wait for the principal in the scenario presented above would have been unnecessary. My view is that the teachers, convened by the chairperson of the assessment/ curriculum committee or the HOD, could have easily drawn the time tables provided the principal practiced distributed or collective leadership style which encourages teacher participation. Further, my view is that collective decisions, particularly, in the absence of formally appointed managers can assist in honouring deadlines thus keep organisations going. Teacher leadership is also defined as sharing; representing relevant and key ideas about work context beyond individual classrooms in order to improve learning and teaching (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2012). This definition suggests that the sharing of ideas goes beyond classroom contexts. Implicitly, teachers' role goes beyond the confines of the classroom. However, in practice the question can be asked whether the HODs and other teachers in lower levels are capacitated to assume leadership roles of influencing their colleagues and other school leaders. If they are, what stops the school's operational processes if the principal is absent?

The argument suggests the existence of strong hierarchical control which continues to characterise how schools operate. Such control is fingered for preventing teachers from assuming leadership roles (Barth, 2011). Hierarchical structures do this by separating school leaders from other staff, particularly those in entry levels (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2012). Instructions are initiated from the top managers and go down according to levels. That means other teachers have to wait for top-down initiatives from formal leaders to reach their level before relevant actions can be taken. Instructional principals who operate within hierarchical structures appear to be reluctant to grant authority to teachers whom they supervise in spite of the expertise that those teachers might have gained over the years (Helterbran, 2010). It is even worse if power has to be delegated to novice teachers who appear to be non-existent in the eyes of top-most managers wielding positional authority. Consequently, in the absence of instructions from leaders, little or no progress can be initiated at lower management levels.

2.8.4.2 Leadership Development Strategy

Teachers and the HODs in particular, need to be encouraged and supported to see leadership as part of their professional life through collaborative ways of working (Bush & Glover, 2012). School principals and circuit managers in districts have a key role in this exercise (Leonard, Petta & Porter, 2012). School principals, as core of school leadership and point of reference in every school (Bush, 2013), need to be fostering a culture where individual schools can develop their human capacity to meet school challenges in a collective fashion. Their main goal remains to develop and expand teacher leadership, in particular, among teachers occupying management positions. The leadership of school managers ought to encourage and welcome active participation of lower rank managers in higher levels (Bush & Glover, 2012). Developing leaders among managers is one of the school principals' main responsibilities (Nicolaidou, 2010). Major points discussed in this section include building teacher leadership; role of districts; leadership courses; role of principals.

Building teacher leadership should be part of top management's daily practice (Nicolaidou, 2010) sharing, networking, coaching and supporting each other to build a learning community. School principals can help others to be familiar with the characteristics of leadership so that new leaders can be developed. For instance, a suggestion to principals is to rotate delegating principalship to the teachers whenever they are not in attendance in school on a particular day is plausible. Delegated teachers can be informed in advance of their duty and the expectations of the principal. At first, they may experience teething problems here

and there but, as they become familiar with duties, they can improve (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012). Therefore, teachers ought to be familiar with the process of handing over in order to ensure continuity at any point in time. More leaders of change in classrooms will be needed for transformation to gain momentum; the development of more leaders is essential

The role of districts working through the principals is reported to have a remarkable impact on teacher leadership (Leonard, *et al.*, 2012). For instance, research conducted in the United Kingdom found that district initiatives and requirements provided teachers with leadership models and built their professional experience (Nicolaidou, 2010). Teachers who participated in leadership research projects gained confidence and experience in teacher leadership. However, the situation in KZN province where there are no compulsory leadership courses which are specifically meant for teachers at district level, arguably, suggest that the 'hit or miss' leadership style is acceptable although it is not founded on literature. Those who are in management positions and were not subjected to teacher leadership courses prior to assuming these positions tend to protect their knowledge and as presented earlier, they are threatened by empowerment of their subordinates (Le Blanc & Shelton, 2012).

Research shows that professional development alone does not adequately prepare the teachers, the HODs in particular, for leadership roles (Hunzicker, 2012). Professional development in schools, whether internally or externally initiated, tends to focus on steps to be followed when implementing drawn policies of performing classroom duties (Helterbran, 2010). As a result, even the HODs who could be assuming effective leadership roles are afforded, at most, managerial roles of maintaining the *status quo*. For instance, it is not uncommon among the HODs upon arrival at school in the morning to be concerned only with their preparedness to honour class commitments as would be expected of any Post Level One educator, instead of assuming leadership roles by also concerning themselves with readiness of all staff to go to class. Programmes paying special attention to teacher leadership development are necessary in a distributed leadership setting (Bush & Glover, 2012).

School principals can foster leadership in school by articulating their vision of teacher leadership openly (Leonard, Petta & Porter, 2012). Possibly, the hope of becoming leaders among teachers can be refreshed and levels of commitment increased. The role of a principal in fostering teacher development authority to teacher leaders is a sign of trust (Nicolaidou, 2010). Barth (2011) argues that teacher leaders, even though they may initially not be perfect,

allocating them leadership tasks can improve their confidence. This can be achieved, Barth (2011) suggests, by matching each teacher with a project with which s/he is passionate and then provide support by attending their meetings alone can be seen as indirectly promoting teacher passiveness, perceiving such initiatives as extra burden. Rather, it is plausible for teachers to actively initiate their leadership development. Steyn and van Niekerk (2012) present steps which the teachers can follow in order to actively initiate their leadership development process. First is to identify the exact self-shortcomings. This can be achieved when teachers are engaged in daily reflections and identify their own weaknesses in order to develop. Secondly, teacher ought to realise the need for development. The next step is to identify suitable professional development programme that could contribute to their professional growth. The identification of the programme could be supported if it contributes to the attainment of the vision of the school and is considerate of views of other teachers. Thereafter, a teacher can embark on the programme to develop in identified areas of weakness. The end result is the implementation of newly acquired knowledge (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2012). The ideas on management monitoring presented by Steyn and van Niekerk (2012) discussed earlier, arguably, do not seem to encourage going beyond the four walls of the classroom. Their approach perpetuates subservient roles of teachers by suggesting merely preparation of teachers to be effective policy implementers rather than becoming active policy leaders. Teacher leadership development ought to develop leaders who do not only lead within the four walls of the classroom but also go beyond narrow classroom confines (Margolis & Deuel, 2009). The school principals as instructional leaders have to interact with teachers in a distributed leadership fashion to inspire staff to engage in leadership development programmes (Bush, 2013; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). The result can enhance teaching and learning activities.

2.9 Mixed bag of SMT monitoring challenges

As much as we need more teachers to become leaders in order to interact with others in a distributed leadership atmosphere of work monitoring, its processes are not without challenges. Often teacher leaders' simultaneous needs for achievement and promotion can create conflict in the school workplace resulting in negative learning outcomes (Le Blanc & Shelton, 2012). The assertion suggesting that leadership is about influencing others (Poekert, 2012) can be used destructively. For instance, in one school it was reported that an acting HOD within the school wanted to be promoted to a position of deputy principal when other colleagues felt that she was not ready for that promotion. She started using her influence

within the SGB to overlook the experienced HOD who was already acting in that position. Ultimately, the staff and the SGB were split on the matter. Teaching and learning was negatively affected.

The lesson from the above experience is that while developing the teachers to become leaders can be a wonderful idea, the teachers' attention can sometimes be swayed from active endeavours of improving learning and learner performance to other less useful endeavours such as those articulated. The discussion of a mixed bag of challenges that are associated with monitoring by the SMT is exemplified under teacher overload; leadership role confusion; fears of the principals and the role of hierarchical structures. Teachers are overloaded due to teacher-learner ratio which allocates fewer teachers to schools with smaller enrolments (KZN DoE, 2015). Devoting time to marking plus management work for those in the SMT, calls for sacrifice which includes remaining after school with colleagues in order to participate in numerous activities, including reflection and other developmental sessions. For many teachers, that becomes a challenge since they have other family responsibilities to attend after school (Harris & Frost, 2010). For instance, teachers in schools where there is no promotion post vacancy appear not to be interested in taking up a burden of non-paying leadership roles in which they might fail. Instead, they prefer to concentrate on subject related duties in which they are experienced (Le Blanc & Shelton, 2012). Consequently, huge workloads remain on the shoulders of the few SMT members. Nonetheless, there is a need for more teachers to be engaged in leadership development programmes.

Teacher leadership role confusion is also presented as another challenge. Teachers who are already occupying formal management positions see empowerment of the supervisees as posing a threat (Harris & Frost, 2010) to their own positions. Sometimes being in positions of authority provides comfort in working with teachers who lack confidence and who are virtually ignorant. School managers who wield positional authority without expertise often find it difficult to work in distributed leadership atmosphere (Bush & Middlewood, 2013). Consequently, protecting their authority from being shared with supervisees becomes the order of the day.

The perceptions by the school principals that teachers who pay too much attention to developing their leadership skills and less attention on subservient roles as subject policy implementers can pose challenges. Fears are often expressed that extra focus on leadership by

teachers can result in the teachers aspiring to lead and thus completely neglect learner's academic plight which often requires teachers to catch up with its diverse and complex nature (Le Blanc & Shelton, 2012). The other negative factor is the organisational structure of the school which is hierarchical. Hierarchical management structures which predominantly characterise schools in South Africa do not offer inclusive and collective decision making terrains. Hierarchy tends to divide managers and ordinary teachers at the time when collaborative approaches are vital (Bush & Glover, 2012). Any attempt by the teachers to become leaders is not well received in hierarchical management settings. Instead, conflict can be brewed (Barth, 2011). In spite of these negatives, the internal and external school environments demand teacher leadership which acknowledges that schools are socio-political terrains of influence which are highly contested. Therefore, curriculum knowledge alone is not enough for teachers to lead successful classrooms and schools in general. Realities that affect teachers inside and outside of school as well as how these realities are best met require leadership knowledge. The energy of the teacher leaders as agents of change in public education stands a better chance of ensuring high quality teachers in the classroom (Frost & Harris, 2010). Furthermore, collaborative and distributed leadership is seen as major contributor to the success of teacher leadership and organisational growth (Middlewood & Lumby, 2012).

Finally, the influence of unions in supporting SMT endeavours cannot be undermined. In a study conducted on barriers of translating instructional leadership into practice, Bhengu, Naicker and Mthiyane (2014) noted that among other impediments was teacher unionism. Principals had to negotiate with teachers to gain their support for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This was a result of the toxic activities of some teacher unions who wielded a major influence within the department of education (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). Such school situations compelled teachers to choose between following the instructions of the principal or the marching orders of the union leaders. Consequently, principals need to creatively extend their sphere of influence by encouraging teachers to become leaders so that they can make informed decisions. . After all, the development of teacher leadership is one of the school principals' main responsibilities (Clark, 2007; Bush, 2013). The schools need more leaders of change in order to transform classroom challenges. The current challenges of managing teaching and learning are fast becoming difficult to contain (Nicholadou, 2010). Stagnant teacher management responsibilities that have remained the same for decades, as argued earlier, are fast being pushed to the irrelevant periphery.

School principals, the HODs and other teachers who are empowered to assume leadership roles can provide a significant solution to complex classroom challenges which include monitoring of teaching and learning.

2.10 Research conducted on monitoring teaching and learning

In order to obtain other perspectives around leadership strategies of monitoring teaching and learning, sharing insights from the two research projects on this topic from different countries can be useful. The study by Archer and Brown (2013) was conducted in New Zealand (NZ) and the other by Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen (2010) in South Africa. Both research studies examined the significance of leadership in enhancing classroom practice and learning. The study conducted by Archer and Brown (2013) concentrated on examining how the application of assessment tools for teaching and learning (asTTle) influenced curriculum implementation in NZ. The study was conducted within a qualitative, interpretivist research framework. Participants included the teachers who implemented asTTle tool, the school principal who had a PhD in studies associated with asTTle and eight learners from a school. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews of the participants in NZ and was supplemented with the documents that teachers collected.

The key findings included major positive changes which were directly linked to asTTle. The changes included improved teaching practices; teachers' view of curriculum and positive views classroom contexts. The teachers often reflected on their teaching approaches in order to improve. Learners also got inspired to do their individual best without undue pressure of being compared to others. The SMTs gained insights into the comparative performance within the school. In order for these findings not to sound like a miracle or for anyone not thing they are too good to be true, it must be said that there are numerous government sponsored assessment resources which are availed to NZ schools. Consequently, the study did not lack teaching and learning resources as might have been the case in the developing country like South Africa.

The study by Archer and Brown (2013) is very much related to the current study in that the HODs, the principals and even the officials of the NZ Department of Education involved themselves as instructional leaders in classroom activities. Teaching and learning was continuously monitored through the use of assessment tool for teaching and learning. From the study of Archer and Brown (2013) on monitoring teaching and learning, findings indicate

improved learner performance. The study also indicates the significance of ensuring the atmosphere of trust among the SMT and between the teachers and learners as while teaching and learning is being constantly monitored. Teachers taught, learners took ownership of learning and the SMTs interacted with all stakeholders arguably, in a distributed instructional leadership fashion. The study provides some solutions to ‘how the SMTs monitor teaching and learning’. The common thread that permeates their activities is instructional leadership of the SMT working interactively with other stakeholders.

The study by Bush, et al. (2010) conducted locally on managing teaching and learning in South African schools can also clarify some of the issues on leadership influence on teaching and learning. The study was conducted in two provinces Mpumalanga and Limpopo. All schools were located in disadvantaged communities. The four Mpumalanga schools were all from the same disadvantaged township while the other four came from rural areas throughout Limpopo. The reason for making the report on this case by Bush, et al. (2010) is that it has a number of elements which are similar to and which form part of the current study on strategies of monitoring. For instance, I subscribe to common leadership undertakings of managing teaching and learning. These include, but are not limited to, ensuring that lessons take place in the first place; scrutinising assessment results and evaluating learner performance; monitoring the work of the HODs through scrutinising their work files and portfolios; conducting class visits; ensuring that the HODs monitor the work of the educators within their learning areas; ensuring the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support material (LTSM). The disadvantages that come with the rural nature of some schools in the study appear to provide almost similar contexts.

The aim of the study by Bush, et al. (2010) was to assess management of teaching and learning through the case study of leadership practices as well as classroom practices in the selected schools in the two provinces. Participants included the principals, the HODs and the teachers from four schools in each province. The schools were purposively selected due to the participation of principals in a pilot project of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) studies. Their participation in the pilot familiarised them to the concepts of leadership and management dominating the research. Data generation methods included the use of semi-structured individual interviews of the school principals and the HODs. Observations of classroom activities were conducted. Finally, documents with learner performance were analysed.

The findings of Bush, et al. (2010) study indicated that the majority of the principals had a weak grasp of specific issues on teaching and learning. Second, the principals appeared to have no clear system of monitoring teaching and learning. Instructional leadership was confined to work completion instead of making informed judgements on the quality of learning and teaching. The principals were also fingered for attributing their failures to all sorts of contextual factors such as poverty, parental illiteracy, language competence and capabilities of educators rather than taking initiatives to address issues within their control such as monitoring classroom practice (Bush, et al., 2010). It is such findings that aroused interest and curiosity in me to conduct research in order to establish whether or not the findings on similar aspects will differ in other rural contexts such as in the Ilembe District.

The Archer and Brown (2013) conducted almost a similar study in NZ and it provided first world western contexts which may seem far detached from South African realities. However, with issues in most countries fast becoming globalised, the issues in NZ today can soon be issues in South Africa tomorrow. Instructional leadership influence on teachers indirectly associated with improved learner outcomes was noted. The combination of instructional and distributed leadership styles advocated in the current study appears to be line with research perspectives pursued in the international terrains. Therefore, the findings of the study can be valuable for future research. To that affect teachers inside and outside of school as well as how these realities can be met require profound leadership. The energy of the SMT members in public education stands a chance of ensuring high quality teachers in the classroom (Archer & Brown, 2013). Furthermore, collaborative and distributed leadership is seen as major contributor to learner success and organisational growth.

2.11 Conceptual Framework

The core role of a school principal is to enhance teaching and learning (Bush, 2013). Hence, principals and their SMTs ought to be instructional leaders. Spillane (2005) posits that the principal or any other leader in a similar context for that matter is not expected to single-handedly lead schools to great heights. This assertion suggests that SMTs as are not expected to be exclusive in their endeavours to achieve agreed school outcomes. Instead, their approach of monitoring teaching and learning ought to be shared or distributed leadership that extends to other teachers (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2015) with specific expertise at various levels. For instance, although principals are regarded as instructional leaders but

they are not necessarily subject specialists. Therefore, in order to monitor in-class subject related activities they need the expertise of HODs and other subject specialists. Hence the study is located within instructional and distributed leadership concepts.

Principals are expected to interact with others and share or distribute leadership in the atmosphere of trust (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). This expectation is in contrast with the actual practice of principals noted by Bush and Middlewood (2013) presented in Chapter One, that leadership, particularly principals tend to perform tasks alone in their offices spending most of their time attending meetings and performing administrative matters like general policy implementation. Even so, the concept of distributed leadership appears to be relevant in this study and can provide solutions to SMTs of small schools with no deputies. Distributed leadership can assist principals to share some aspects of leadership to teachers in lower levels (Spillane, 2006). As a result, distributed and instructional leadership concepts form the framework within which the study is located.

The study borrows the concept of distributed leadership as presented by Spillane (2005) who describes it as a concept which is about leadership practice rather than the roles, functions and structures as well as the routines of leaders. Distributed leadership practice is viewed as a product of interactions of leaders, followers (Post level one educators) and their context. The situation in small rural schools, with a small learner enrolment prevents them from qualifying to have deputies (KZN DoE, 2015), thus compelling school principals to be directly involved with monitoring and support of classroom activities. The concept of distributed leadership is seen to be offering SMTs an opportunity to lead instruction with and through others presumably in the atmosphere of trust.

In a study conducted by Bush and Glover (2012) in the UK, some members of school leadership teams (SLT) hailed distributed leadership as a shift towards an increased autonomy and trust. Bush and Glover (2012) note that most successful head teachers prefer to work in distributed leadership spheres across their leadership teams. As a consequence the claim which is related to distributed leadership they make, is that leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Situation is a major concept within the distributed leadership framework. The critical issue, according to Spillane (2005), is not that leadership is distributed but how it is distributed. It is not simply the actions of the principal or leaders in other levels. Thus, when studying

leadership practice, one examines the interaction between the leaders, followers, and elements of the situation. Bhengu and Gounder (2014) posit that this theory is relevant to institutions where learning is everybody's business including the principals and the HODs and not just for those who are in lower levels. Multiple leadership skills obtainable from everyone, the HODs and teachers alike, can be utilised in a distributed fashion, particularly in routines such as monitoring and evaluation.

Bush and Glover (2012) argue that it is necessary for the principal to know good instruction when they see it in order to commend all who are involved. Likewise, they can encourage good instruction where its doses are weak or non-existent and facilitate on-going development for staff (Owen, 2001; Bush & Glover, 2012). Briefly, school principals and the HODs are expected to be conversant with what occurs in classrooms on regular basis so that they can confidently intervene when necessary.

Instructional leadership as defined by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2015) is the influence relationship that motivates, enables and supports teachers' efforts to learn about and improve their teaching practices. In support for the view of school managers, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (2009) posits that school managers should lead teaching and learning through leading by example (modelling), knowing what is occurring in the classroom (monitoring). This assertion suggests that the principals and the HODs are instructional leaders and should be actively involved in teaching and learning monitoring as part of their priority projects (Bush, 2013; Du Plessis, 2013).

Bush (2013) emphasises the significance of the principal as an instructional leader. He argues that school principals can impact on classroom teaching by becoming instructional leaders. The distributed leadership of the principal ought to be aimed at promoting the purpose of schooling by extending leadership roles to others (Bush, 2013). The conceptualisation of instructional leadership borrowed from Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2015) describes it as an influence relationship that motivates, enables and supports teachers' efforts to learn about and change their teaching practices. Rigby (2014) observes that it is the longest established concept which links leadership and learning. Its significance emanates from the fact that it focuses on the direction of influence. As presented earlier, instructional leadership influence is targeted at students via teachers. Other terms used to refer to the similar concept include pedagogic leadership and curriculum leadership (Harris, 2008; Bush, 2013).

Lambert (2013), however, argues against the concept of school managers becoming instructional leaders who prevail over the entire school without participation of other teachers. Instead, he prefers to revive the phrase leadership for learning. However, even this phrase has its own challenges. It suggests emphasis on learning as if all forms of learning are exclusive of teaching; an assertion which is challengeable. My contention is that teachers teach so that learning can occur. Rigby (2014) arguing in support of instructional leadership, posit that like other forms of leadership, it is constructed and therefore occurs through an interactive processing which the followers construct others as leaders based on valued forms of human skills, knowledge and expertise. The argument suggesting that instructional leadership implies single-handedly prevailing over all other teachers in the school falls away. Hence, this study is guided by instructional leadership with the understanding that teaching and learning go together. The phrase commonly used in South Africa is managing teaching and learning (MTL) (Bush, 2013).

This study is therefore located within distributed and instructional leadership due to the appropriateness of these concepts to the contexts of the research. The research focuses on teaching and learning, in particular, the monitoring thereof. Monitoring of the curriculum implementation cannot be conducted by only one person, a principal or HOD. Instead, the interaction of the principal, the HODs and school contexts is considered suitable to be carried out through distributed leadership concept. Therefore, instructional and distributed leadership concepts are appropriate in guiding this study.

2.12 Chapter summary

Monitoring of classroom activities supports the local and international mandates. Numerous reasons for the significance of curriculum implementation can be given, including monitoring to identify the needs and the challenges as well as for accountability. Various strategies of assessing implementation in different classroom contexts worldwide have been applied. Assessment and feedback are aspects which were discussed as monitoring strategies. The drawing of school programmes and monitoring instruments were presented as significant vehicles of monitoring effective implementation. In order to ease the load on the principals, human resource development is discussed as a strategy of monitoring through empowered teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is convenient, particularly, in situations where schools have fewer or no HODs.

The challenges associated with leadership in schools are shared. The product of instructional and distributed leadership styles of running schools as well as interacting with teachers in context is presented as a possible solution to the challenges. The challenges of learners who lag behind in learning programmes only to be discovered in next grades can be addressed through constant monitoring. In conclusion, the monitoring of teaching and learning is a significant activity in which the principal and the HODs as instructional leaders interact in a distributed leadership fashion in order to achieve the set goals. They ought to devise monitoring strategies which can be adopted and implemented in a distributed leadership atmosphere. Hence, the concepts presented as guiding the study are instructional and distributed leadership styles applied in more flattened than hierarchical structures.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter an intensive review of related literature on SMT strategies of monitoring teaching and learning plus the conceptual framework guiding the study was presented. In this chapter the research design and methodology of the study is presented. As part of the research design, the chapter begins by discussing the research paradigm; research design; research methodology; sampling methods and access to the research sites; data generation methods and application; data analysis methods and procedures; measures to ensure trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations. The chapter ends with a summary. The next sections provide a detailed discussion of each of the components listed in this paragraph.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Prior to embarking on the study it is vital to decide on the paradigm within which the study is located. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher must adopt a stance guided by the focus of the study. The focus of the study is on strategies that are used by members of the SMT to monitor curriculum implementation. The study sought to understand how principals and HODs as members of SMTs monitored teaching and learning. According to Christiansen (2010) the interpretive paradigm is concerned with detailed descriptions of how people make sense of their worlds and how they make meaning of their particular actions. Unlike the post-positivist research whose belief is that the world is in a fixed state, interpretive research allows for naturalistic research which caters for real-world contexts (Christiansen, 2010). The reason for this research to fall under the interpretive paradigm is that it involves interaction with people. That is principals and HODs in their contexts. The interpretive paradigm leads to naturalistic research. This means that research is carried out in natural, simple and real-world contexts. These descriptions fit the intentions of the research herein presented. Christiansen (2010) further asserts that interpretive researchers seek to describe how people make sense of their worlds and the contexts in which they live and work. As a result, the study is situated in the interpretive paradigm.

School principals and the HODs as leaders of the whole school and departments/ phases respectively, articulated their strategies on how they monitor teaching and learning. Based on their school contexts they conveyed their experiences on curriculum implementation

monitoring process. The interpretive paradigm seemed to be appropriate for this case study since participants shared their monitoring strategies in their unique contexts and background which is in line with assertions by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2005).

3.3 Research Design

The research design is the approach that is followed in order to understand an issue (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The research was a study of two specific small neighbouring rural schools, one primary and the other secondary in Ilembe District, KwaZulu-Natal. Hence it was a case study of the two schools which had no deputies. In addition to management functions principals of these schools, like HODs, were also full time subject teachers. Consequently, it was not known how the SMTs in the two schools go about monitoring instruction when they had so much in their hands and not enough human resource. As a result the approach of conducting this case study had to be qualitative. The approach is in harmony with Creswell (2007) who asserts that in a qualitative research approach the researcher explores a bounded system that is a specific case or cases. In this case the aim was to uncover and explore SMT strategies in the contexts of principals and HODs as practitioners in the two schools. According to Bertram (2010), the qualitative approach enables one to better understand human behaviour and experience in different contexts. Therefore, a case study as a qualitative research design enables the researcher better obtain a deeper understanding of how participants perceive things while they maintain the physical presence in the research setting (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2005). As such, observing the school setting and the way participants interacted was also significant. However, due to time constraints the research project generated data concentrating on individual interviews with open-ended questions and review of scanty documents such as attendance registers as well as SMT files. The approach ties in with the interpretive research design (Christiansen, 2010).

3.4 Research population

The research interviews were conducted on SMT members of two schools and data was recorded in order to ensure accuracy. This section is discussed under the following subheadings: selection of participants; data recording.

3.4.1 Selection of participants

The participants were chosen for the relevance of the positions they hold in the school; they had to be members of the SMT. Therefore, selection of participants was purposive. According

to Bertram (2010), purposive sampling can assist in a study which aims to focus on targeted individuals and groups. In this regard the research consisted of two principals and all HODs from the selected schools. Principals were selected because, by virtue of their position, principals are better placed to provide the aerial perspectives of the school while HODs can give specific information on monitoring in-class teaching and learning activities as well as challenges associated with it, if any (Bush, 2013).

The two schools were purposively chosen for their accessibility and proximity to each other. In addition, both schools had almost similar contexts; that is smaller enrolments and staff without deputies. These small rural schools did not qualify to have deputy principal posts due to their small enrolments (KZN DoE, 2015). Exploring SMT strategies in such challenging contexts of a primary and secondary schools was the focus of study and hence these schools were chosen.

3.4.2 Data recording

Since similar questions were prepared for all participants although probes differed according to individual contexts at the time of the discussions, it was not going to be easy to write individual probes during the discussion while also trying to keep track of participant's responses. Therefore, a voice recording device was utilised. According to Christiansen (2010), interviewing is a useful method in qualitative research, but may require the researcher to audio-tape the interview to keep accurate records. In line with this view, a voice recording device was used to keep the accurate record of each participant's responses.

3.5 Data generation methods

There are two methods that were used to generate qualitative data that would assist in addressing research questions and these are semi-structured interviews and documents review. Each of these methods is discussed in the next section.

3.5.1 Interviews

In line with the interpretive research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to allow the researcher to ask questions which were pre-planned and also cater for unforeseen circumstances that may require unplanned follow-up questions (Bertram, 2010). As such, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted on school principals and the

HODs to generate in-depth data in participants' own perspectives of monitoring teaching and learning (Bertram, 2010; Christiansen, 2010).

Before embarking on the actual interview, the pilot interview was conducted in order to familiarise myself with the voice recorder and other necessary procedures of the interview. The pilot was conducted on one principal whom I asked to participate, voluntarily. The actual participants were interviewed individually within their school premises during times when they were free. Due to unavailability of quiet space and learner noise at Lawuma Secondary (*pseudonym*), interviews were conducted in my vehicle in order to minimise distractions. Each participant was afforded three minutes of informal introductory conversation to ease possible tension prior to recording the actual interview. The duration of individual interviews ranged from twenty five to forty eight minutes. Time depended on the inputs of the participant. Though I had wished to make follow ups after listening to the voice recording after hours but since they used common transport it was not feasible. In fact, it was hard to secure a second follow up session at any time.

3.5.2 Document reviews

In order to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research approaches, Lincoln and Guba (1985) present, among other constructs, dependability as measure of assessing the integrated process of data generation. As a result data generated through participant interviews was checked against documents supporting the implementation of work monitoring. These documents include attendance registers, learner books and teacher files. It was assumed that attendance registers would show evidence of attendance so that any claim can be verified. Learner books were going to be used to ascertain the frequency of written work versus monitoring by SMT. Documents which the participants claimed to be using as monitoring instruments, such as the periodic registers and curriculum monitoring tools were also viewed to confirm their claims, though they were not readily available upon requested. Actually, participants were reluctant to allow access to the documents until they were reassured that names of schools and teachers were to be erased in copies of documents in order to guarantee anonymity. Even then, when it was time to submit not all documents were available.

3.6 Data analysis

Often the data generated from participants needs to be organised in order for it to make sense. The analysis of this study borrows from Bertram (2010) and Cohen, *et al* (2011) who posit

that qualitative data analysis can follow an inductive approach. That is beginning with data to form theories. In this approach data concepts are clustered into patterns which are put into categories to form themes.

After the interviews had been conducted the audio-tape recording of the interviews was transcribed and typed. Thereafter the information was analysed using advice offered by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). First, the transcripts were carefully read. Sentences as well as key words were organised and classified into concepts. These concepts were then organised into themes denoting strategies used by managers when monitoring teaching and learning (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Bertram, 2010). Themes were highlighted using different marking pens. Similar themes were allocated the same colour. Appearing trends were identified and discussed against the critical questions and literature review.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The critical moment in qualitative approaches occurs when trust in the research findings has to be determined. In this research I chose to borrow from Lincoln and Guba (1985) who are generally regarded as pioneers of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) present dependability, confirmability, transferability and credibility as alternative constructs which are appropriate to determine trust in the qualitative study. Each of these criteria is presented in the following paragraphs.

Dependability refers to an assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data generation, data analysis and theory generation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To enhance dependability, interviews were checked against documents supporting the implementation of work monitoring (triangulation). These documents include attendance registers, learner books and monitoring instruments. Data and emergent findings were to be discussed with colleagues in the same discipline to ensure analyses are grounded in data (peer debriefing) but this was not successful since participants did not avail themselves. Sticking to these procedures was an attempt to indirectly address dependability.

Confirmability measures how well the inquiry's findings are supported by data generated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are various techniques that can be used to ensure confirmation. For purposes of this study generated data and subsequent interpretations were shared with some participants who did not decline the offer. To start with, the transcripts

were given to them to read and confirm that such transcripts indeed represented the content of what transpired during our conversations with them. In addition, during the interviews, I ensured that I shared with them my understanding of what they were telling me. In that way, research participants would agree or disagree with me and correct me. In that way, I ensured that my interpretation was consistent with their, and this technique is generally known as member checking.

The third criterion is credibility and it refers to the believability of what the researcher claims to have found. In this regard, Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered a set of procedures to ensure credibility. These are prolonged engagement, member-checking and peer-debriefing. In this study I can say that I spent considerably longer time on site in the sense that besides coming to the schools for purposes of conducting interviews, I also came back and spent more time reviewing various documents. In addition, participants were given ample time to read the transcripts of the interviews and were able to confirm their inputs. That helped enhance the credibility of my interpretations.

Finally, transferability was applied during the study. This refers to the degree to which the findings of the inquiry can apply or be transferred beyond the bounds of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the context of this study, I ensured that I provided thick descriptions of all the steps that I undertook in the process of conducting the study. In that way, other researchers who intend to conduct a similar study know almost every step that I took and they can do the same. I have also ensured that all key concepts used in the study have been contextualised sufficiently. Therefore, the constructs presented appear to be appropriate and relevant in this qualitative research on curriculum monitoring strategies.

3.8 Ethical considerations

In order to conduct the study ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Then permission to conduct research in two schools in Ilembe under the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education was sought. In both cases written confirmation was obtained before the research started. Principals of the participating schools we approached and informed about the study and its purposes. They were also asked to give consent. Participants were given written information about the research and then gave written informed consent to participate and to be recorded before participating (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

Participants were also informed about their autonomy and their rights to privacy. As part of their autonomy, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage during the study without any negative repercussions. Protection against any possible harm was guaranteed. In keeping with the principle of non-maleficence, confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed. For instance, their identity was protected in the sense that nobody including the officials of the provincial Department of Education will know what they told me as it was said in confidence. Secondly, their names will never be known as I used *pseudonyms* as a strategy of concealing the identity of their schools and the names of individual participants. They were informed that after the completion of the study all records, written and voice-recorded would be safely kept in the supervisor's locked cabinet for a period of five years. Thereafter, all data will be destroyed. Hard copies of transcripts would be shredded and the electronic records deleted from the computer.

3.9 Limitations of the study

Although an attempt was made not to conduct research in schools which I supervised as a circuit manager, I was compelled to one school. Samela (*pseudonym*) was approached when it appeared that SMT members in the intended school were on long leave and the school had to be excused from participating. Therefore, a limitation is that some participant responses may have reflected more on what they thought the 'circuit manager' expected than their actual views. The absence of longer follow ups on individual interviews was another limiting factor. Participants used common transport to school. The possibility of remaining after school to cater for follow ups was not a possibility. Only brief sessions with individual principals were conducted. Participants cited other commitments as the main reason for not availing themselves for further discussions and clarifications. Finally, the study needed longer time to conduct but time frames did not permit. To overcome this challenge, a number of telephone calls were made where additional information was sought.

3.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter I first discussed the interpretive paradigm of the study and the reasons why it was deemed suitable for this research. The relevance of the case study research design in a qualitative approach was presented as an attempt to understand narratives from the perspective of the participants. Then aspects of the methodology were also discussed. These aspects included the research population where the choice of participants was discussed; data

generation instruments and procedures; how data analysis was conducted as well as, the issues of trustworthiness. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study conclude the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three I presented the research design and methodology which was utilised in this study. In this chapter data presentation and discussion is done. The data was generated from five participants in two schools, Samela Primary School and Lawuma Secondary school (*pseudonyms*). The pseudonyms of participants and their ranks are, from Samela Primary School, Mrs Thwala, the principal and Mrs Miya, the HOD. From Lawuma Secondary School, the participants were Ms Ntuli and Mr Zwane who were HODs plus Mr Kubheka, the principal. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews and documents review of monitoring tools such as minutes and policies which participants had claimed to be using.

4.2 Themes that emerged after the analysis of data

Herein, the themes that emerged from data analysis are presented under the following headings: (1) School Management Team (SMT) strategies of monitoring teachers and learners on task; (2) SMT experiences of monitoring teaching and learning; (3) Realities informing SMT monitoring approaches.

4.3 SMT Strategies of monitoring teachers and learners on task

There are six SMT strategies emerging from data that was generated from responses to the first question. These strategies will be discussed under the following themes: (a) Submission of teacher files; (b) class attendance verification; (c) moderation of assessment tasks; (d) class visits; (e) checking of learner exercise books; (f) teacher leadership development. These strategies focus mainly on the role that teachers played in the classroom although some, like class attendance register, could also be used to monitor both the teachers and the learner activities (Van Joolingen, 1999).

4.3.1 Submission of teacher files

The checking of teachers' files was found to be the common strategy that was used by all the participants to keep track of teaching and learning activities. Teaching files contained, among other things, daily teaching preparations, annual subject teaching plans, copies of tests and memoranda, mark scores on continuous assessment. Similar to AsTTle in the case of New Zealand (Archer & Brown, 2013), participants utilised specific tools to monitor progress in a variety of these teaching activities. For instance, there was a tool which the SMTs used to

monitor lesson preparation which included regular checking of curriculum coverage. The SMTs preferred to check the teachers' files of daily preparations once every week day. Each teacher chose a day of the week on which he or she would submit the file. The choice of the week day and the number of teachers who were to submit on that day varied between the two schools. Sometimes various departments within the same school also differed. Participants were asked to reveal their strategies of monitoring teaching and learning. To this end, Mrs Thwala, the principal of Samela Primary School responded like this:

We asked each teacher to select a day in a week on which they will submit. Then we know that the Grade 1 educator, for instance, will submit on this day, not daily and the Grade 2 educator also chose her own day to submit.

The use of the strategy was also confirmed by Mrs Miya from Samela Primary School. Weekly submission of files was also echoed at neighbouring Lawuma Secondary School. The slight difference between Samela SMT strategy and that of Lawuma is that the HOD at Lawuma took charge of the agenda; they sat down and decided on the submission day, and it was not the teachers who chose the day of the week on which teachers in the department were going to submit preparations. Further, the teacher preparations were done a week before the actual activities ensued. Also, teachers of the same department submitted on the same weekday. Mr Zwane, an HOD from Lawuma Secondary School, had this to say:

Teachers are supposed to submit on each and every Tuesday for the whole week that is going to follow. In their lesson plans, I check the correlation between work schedules (also known as Annual teaching plan; or ATP) and lesson plans. Sometimes I take learner exercise books so that I can check the correlation between the three (ATP, lesson plan and learner exercise books).

Apparently, in the first meeting of departments at Lawuma submission days are announced. This version of the event was corroborated by Ms Ntuli who said:

On the first meeting we gave Friday as the day when lesson plans should be submitted for contents to be taught the following week.

Comments of the participants suggested that school departmental policies were in line with CAPS for the approved subjects which state that each subject must have dates on which some form of measurement will be conducted and the composite scheduling of subject evaluation dates constituting a school assessment programme (Department of Basic Education, 2011a). Adopting the policy of weekly submissions, however, did not trigger spontaneous compliance by all the teachers. Generally teachers often forgot about the submission dates. When the

HODs were asked about what they did if the teachers did not submit on the agreed days, this is how Ms Ntuli responded:

I give them a reminder. You have to remind them that, for instance, you have received only one file out of four. Then they remember that it's a Friday and they submit their lesson plans for the following week (Ms Ntuli).

Mr Zwane from the same school echoed similar sentiments saying:

Educators do not submit on the day they are supposed to submit. In some instances you find that out of eight educators only two submitted.

It was noted that some of the participants seemed to cover for the teachers' delays by trivialising the teachers' lack of compliance with the set submission dates; these HODs claimed that the teachers 'forget' and therefore had to be reminded. Apparently, these participants were careful not to bluntly criticise the teachers' lack of punctuality. Instead they had strategies of making teachers to ultimately submit. Other participants would remind teachers of the commitments they made at the beginning of the year and then, as a last resort, report to the principal. *"I talk to them. If the situation does not change I report to the principal"*, Mr Zwane commented.

The popular strategy among the participants was to disown the process and partly shift the ownership of monitoring teaching and learning to seniors or the department. This is how Mrs Miya put it:

I tell them, we agreed on dates of submission but the policy was not adopted by me. The department did and they (the Department of Education) tell us what to do (Mrs Miya).

Another point to be raised here is that some participants seemed to be very reluctant to be decisive in their action. They often easily yielded to rescheduling of submission dates in order to avoid tensions or confrontation. Sometimes they even used the strategy of throwing names of their supervisors in order to make supervisees to comply.

If they request an extension to submit on Monday instead of Friday, I agree. But I tell them that they must make sure that it is submitted on Monday because Mr X (pseudonym of Circuit Manager) has issued a form that I need to fill in and sign after your submissions (Ms Ntuli).

It was obvious that submissions did not come easily as would be expected from people who had agreed on the schedule of submissions. The negative influence of unionism can be partly blamed for such acts (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). The participants appeared to have

adopted policies which they later chose not to support. Clark (2007) warns that policy documents alone do not promote effective management. Instead, Clark (2007) argues that they simply set out expectations about the way things should be done. Against such argument the SMT members could be expected to draw precise step by step procedures to be followed when attempting to fulfil the set goals. In that way clear steps that had to be followed in the case of non-compliance were to be openly declared and known by all. As a consequence, the tendency by the HODs to be indecisive and instead play the game of shifting responsibility and accountability could be tackled at once.

In order to confirm claims of participants that they had monitoring instruments and that such instruments were being used, I asked them to show me their monitoring files so that I could check the tools they had filled the previous weeks. The documents requested included weekly tools for monitoring teacher preparation, teachers' attendance registers, period register and a copy of minutes of a meeting held during the month of April. The month of April was chosen because it was the beginning of the new term and plans for the year were already underway. That is, everybody had to have implemented resolutions of the beginning of the year and hopefully, everybody would be using the tools at least once. However, some participants were not comfortable with the submission of documents at the time. Then they were asked to photocopy tools which had been filled during the common period which was the first two weeks in April in both schools to be handed in. Actual names of people and schools had to be erased before documents were submitted. All other entries made had to be kept including the teacher or the SMT signatures. Signatures in documents were used to check the monitoring by relevant supervisors.

Upon reviewing the copies of monitoring the instruments that had been submitted, numerous inconsistencies were observed. Note that some of these forms were designed such that the principal is supposed to supervise the HOD by making 'yes/no' ticks in response to whether certain aspects of teaching have been done or not and then make comments where necessary. Also, the main focus of the SMT tool was to check the volume of work that had been done and the amount of work still to be done. A glaring observation made was that submission of files was not consistently done as participants had planned. In some weekly curriculum monitoring tools only the signature of the principal was appended and the space meant for the HOD to sign was left blank. Almost all the tools were designed for monitoring predominantly the amount of work done and less focus on quality.

Further, in most of the monitoring tools that were submitted tick boxes were made only against the items that were checked such as the preparations being up to date. However, there were no detailed comments in spaces provided for remarks. Where the form was meant for HOD as the supervisor to monitor the work of the educators, only the signature of the HOD was appended and the educator signature was missing. This raised some suspicions in me regarding the rationale for not filling-in the monitoring tool by both the supervisor and supervisee. In some instances, the tools that were signed by both the principal as supervisor and the HOD as supervisee were not for period in April which had been requested. Apparently, monitoring was not regularly conducted. Obviously, some members of the SMT had contravened policies that they had adopted by not adhering to weekly monitoring of work progress.

In conclusion, I can surmise that the whole exercise of monitoring which was supposed to be guided by the adopted policies lacked consistency; was characterised by laxity in the HODs and therefore, lacked credibility. Inconsistent monitoring was not in harmony with the views of numerous scholars such as Lock, Qin and Brause (2007) as well as Gamlem and Smith (2013) who suggest that data gathering, including monitoring, must be conducted at regular intervals followed by the analysis and feedback which must be given so that necessary intervention strategies can be undertaken. Furthermore, monitoring at regular intervals enables managers to better schedule their work as well as improve quality and efficiency.

4.3.2 Attendance verification

The data has revealed that some participants claimed to be using period register to monitor attendance during class periods. It is common practice in schools for this tool to be signed by the teachers as they come in and get out of classes on a normal school day (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). Often, the teachers are expected to record the names of the learners who are not in class during that period. In such a case, the period register is used to monitor the attendance of both the teachers and the learners in class. Only one participant (Mr Zwane) claimed to rely on the period register as a tool for monitoring learner attendance. This is what he had to say:

We use the periodic register to gather information on learner attendance during school periods (Mr Zwane).

When documents were requested in order to verify its utilisation, the periodic register was not among the documents that were submitted to me. Instead, a summary of learners who were absent during certain periods was given. Therefore, the availability or even the use of a periodic register as was claimed could not be substantiated. It was not clear as to how other participants monitored attendance during teaching periods.

The attendance and punctuality of the teachers at school is obviously one of the starting points for effective teaching which deserves close monitoring. The remoteness of the place and shortage of transport seemed to dictate the starting time and departure time at Lawuma Secondary School. This claim was backed by entries in the attendance register which the teachers signed as they arrive and depart from school.

If you may think of the remoteness of our school, teachers will be bound to be away at 14h45. Two or three teachers will be available to be with learners in the afternoon
(Mr Kubheka).

Since the attendance register for the teachers was often locked in the still cabinet after hours, apparently teachers who remained after school could not sign the register. Therefore the claim that some teachers remain behind after school could not be supported by any submitted copies of attendance registers. This compromised the credibility of the story as one had to rely on their version of the story. Departure times appearing on the register did not reflect teachers signing out after 15h30 as it would have been the case if some teachers remained after school. Nonetheless, the control of the teacher attendance register also did not seem to receive priority treatment by the school management in the two schools. For instance, the documents review showed that sometimes teachers did not sign on certain days and no comments were made against their names. Learner attendance registers were monitored in the morning and afternoon but not during teaching periods. Implicitly, there was no record of learner attendance during the teaching time. Therefore, the claim of using periodic registers to monitor class attendance could not be verified.

4.3.3 Moderation of assessment tasks

It emerged from the data that SMTs monitored teaching and learning by moderating the assessment tasks of the learners. The SMT seemed to be concerned about the quality of, for instance, the projects and tests that were prepared by the teachers for the learners. As a strategy of assuring quality, assessment tasks were moderated before given to the learners.

This seemed to be a preferred technique by the SMT members. In support of this claim Ms Ntuli had this to say:

The work that is given to the learners by the teachers must be of high quality and appropriate. In order to ensure that, I verify the quality of the assignment or test before it is given to the learners. If there are things that need some improvement I indicate that to the teacher concerned.

Such positive endeavours were reiterated by other participants as well. However, some remarks by other participants suggested that these policies were merely symbolic and represented SMT members' wishful thinking. For instance, on the same point of verifying the quality of written assessment, Mr Zwane made the following comment:

According to the policy each and every assessment that the teachers are supposed to give to the learners should firstly be submitted to the HOD for pre-moderation, but that is not happening. There is a tool designed for that purpose. To be realistic, it is not used. They give me a question paper today that is supposed to be written tomorrow. Sometimes the HODs only know about the test when it has been written.

Clearly, the participants had policies which were meant to uphold assessment of high quality. For instance, in harmony with Southworth (2004), the submission policy was meant for subject teachers to submit tests and other tasks to the HOD some days before these could be given to the learners. Regrettably, when the policy was not followed and submission dates were not honoured, the SMT members seemed to lack the courage to confront those teachers who did not submit their work. This practice of failing to submit was contrary to the CAPS guidelines which clearly state that first the question paper must be submitted to the HOD or specialist teacher for moderation as a quality assuring measure sometime before it is given to learners (Southworth, 2004; DBE, 2011c). For action to be taken against the offending parties, the HODs reported the matter to the principal and *vice-versa*. When the participants were asked about the action that they took against teachers who violated or do not comply with the policies, contradicting views emerged from the participants. It was not clear who was supposed to take the final decisions between the HOD and principal:

I always pass it onto the HOD so that the HOD can follow on. I make the HOD aware that this is what I have detected (Mr Kubheka).

The principal's comment suggested that the HOD was the one to take the final decisions on the question of compliance, and not the principal. He defended his position by arguing that the HODs were closer to the teachers and that they were better placed to deal with such

matters than the principals. But one HOD expressed the opposite view, saying. *“If there is a problem, I report to the principal”*, said Mr Zwane.

While such finger pointing and counter finger pointing is not helpful at all, it suggests that there are some weaknesses in the work of the SMT members in schools. For instance, some gaps were identified between the SMT members in their interactions with each other as instructional leaders. The HOD seemed to rely on the principal to wield his or her positional authority in addressing non-compliance problems but the principal seemed to spare his or her instructional leadership role. Instead, some principals seemed to rely on the HOD’s authority of expertise. In such a situation clearly teachers appeared to lack direction and also took advantage of the vacuum wherein the HOD and the principal were not ready to act decisively against for instance, non-compliance. If the SMT members could emphasise the continuum of quality monitoring as part of IQMS, such unwarranted gaps could be tackled. Bush and Glover (2009) assert that in some schools IQMS implementation occurs as some form of a monitoring device wherein the teacher scores are compiled through various performance standards. Some of these standards require the SMT members to exercise their distributed instructional leadership skills to interact with teachers when performing tasks (Department of Education, 2003; Lambert, 2013).

4.3.4 Teacher leadership development

Another observation made in both schools was the understaffing experienced by the SMT members. Reason for the shortage of adequate staff complement is due to low learner enrolments (KZN DoE, 2015). Sometimes the HODs who had been declared additional from smaller schools, like Lawuma Secondary School and Samela Primary School, which do not qualify to have more than two HODs, were placed in other schools with increased learner enrolment. Consequently, teaching in schools like the ones sampled for this study, occurred without proper monitoring of teaching and learning and also, not conducted by experienced permanent HODs. Participants were also asked to comment about how they monitored teaching and learning in their situations. Mr Zwane shared his views as follows:

I am managing two departments; Maths and Science as well as Commerce departments. So we have talked with the Commerce department and we have agreed to identify one educator among them who is going to act as their HOD. He is the one who is assisting me in monitoring the work. He monitors and then comes back to me to discuss the work.

Among the duties of a teacher in South Africa, in terms of the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, is to take on leadership role in respect of their respective subjects, learning area or phase (Department of Education, 1998). The field of teacher leadership acknowledges that schools are terrains with multiplicity of challenges. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2012), curriculum knowledge alone is not enough for teachers to lead successful classrooms and schools in general. Realities that affect the teachers inside and outside of school as well as how these realities are best met require leadership knowledge. The energy of teacher leaders as agents of change in public education stands a better chance of ensuring high quality teachers in the classroom (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012). Furthermore, the SMT members working collaboratively in a distributed leadership fashion with teachers they supervise is seen as major contributors to the success of teacher leadership and organisational growth (Nicolaidou, 2010). Mr Kubheka confirmed Mr Zwane's arrangement when he said:

The teachers that are there in the commerce department now are newly appointed Fundza-Lushaka bursary holders. We are in the process of grooming them to monitor work in their department. What is interesting is that they monitor each other because they are both new from university. One will monitor what the other is doing and vice-versa. At the end of it all, one of them will submit to Mr Zwane who is a seasoned HOD.

The teachers in the commerce department had less than two years of teaching experience. However, due to heavy work load on the HOD, one of the novice educators had to play the supervisory role as the acting HOD. Acting as HOD was an internal arrangement and therefore could not be remunerated since that was not authorised by the Department of Education. In the absence of the HOD or seasoned teachers, the SMT members became creative by developing leaders among the teachers at lower level even though they were still novices in the field of teaching. Such an arrangement tallies with the assertion by Hunzicker (2012) that the approach of grooming teachers to assume leadership roles is significant now when socio-economic and political forces have a major impact in current classrooms. Further, Clark (2007) argues that leadership is working with and through other people to achieve organisational goals. Again, leadership is seen not as a sole preserve of individuals at the top but instead it is to be extended to and exercised by anybody within the organisation (Frost & Harris, 2010).

Human resource development as a strategy of improving the monitoring of teaching and learning appears to be more relevant when also targeting both entry level and management

level teachers. Regular meetings between substantively appointed HODs and teachers assisting as HODs can become the means of providing support. The regular discussions which Mr Zwane held with the acting HOD served as on-the-job development of the teachers to assume leadership roles. Such an arrangement is in harmony with the assertion by Le Blanc and Shelton (2013) that teacher leaders working as a team is important for teacher collaboration to achieve set goals. Development of other teachers to leadership roles was also confirmed by Ms Ntuli when she said:

One of my educators is a strategist. When I am faced with a problem I am not expected to know everything simply because I am an HOD. She deals with the challenges and solves them.

The impression that I got was that the participants did welcome the inclusion of Post level one educators in supervisory responsibilities such as monitoring curriculum implementation although they were circumstantially obliged to do so. The inclusion did not seem to come from a belief by the SMT members believing in the teacher leadership development or a desire to develop leadership capacities among the teachers. Instead, it appears to have arisen out of either the participant's unbearable overload or the challenges that the HOD had encountered and the inclusion of teachers outside the SMT was deemed to be a solution. Only then did participants acknowledge that roles normally set aside for SMTs could equally be extended to the teachers to perform. Nonetheless, the decisions they took is congruent with the views expressed by Poekert (2012) who argues that leadership practice is constructed in the interaction of leaders, followers and their context in the execution of tasks. This argument seems to be relevant in the contexts of the two sampled schools where members of SMT were few due to lower learner enrolments. Bush and Glover (2012) argue that major success can be achieved by distributing leadership responsibilities across leadership teams. Hence, they assert that leadership, including that of monitoring instruction, has a greater influence on schools when it is widely distributed.

4.3.5 Class visits

Most participants referred to class visits as a strategy on monitoring teaching and learning. Apparently, it was generally expected that the teachers would be visited while performing their tasks in the classrooms but no policy in both schools clearly articulated the frequency and procedures to be followed during class visits (DoE, 2003). Therefore, it was a challenge to even attempt determining how many visits were to be conducted and what was to be done

with findings thereof. Mr Kubheka hinted possible reasons why the SMT members were reluctant to formulate specific procedures to be followed on class visits.

Teachers always view being assessed or being monitored as if you are infringing on their rights. You are trespassing on their domain. You are not always welcome. They will feel as though you are targeting them for one or other reason (Mr Kubheka).

These comments suggest that the participants were reluctant to conduct class visits as a result of the negative feedback conveyed for instance through the body language of teachers when SMT members interacted with them. The relationship between high ranking officials of the department and the teacher union leadership intimidates SMTs, particularly principals (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). As a result, excuses were often presented by some participants for indefinite postponement of class visits. For an example, Ms Ntuli expressed her concern like this:

I monitored once during this second term because we had a strike. I was going to have class visits but class visits are a challenge..... Everybody knows that they are good teachers. No one thinks they aren't. If you make suggestions to improve teaching they refer to you as Miss 'Know-it-all'.

The first part of the complaint was about the teacher strike which prevented class visits. However, the rest of the comment echoes similar sentiments to those of Mr Kubheka on the actual reasons why participants were reluctant to visit teachers while on duty in class. Another participant also acknowledged the challenges of class visits and shared some fears to conduct them. He lamented that:

When you come for a class visit it is as if you are undermining his/her professionalism; as if you are doubting his/her capacity as a subject teacher. The moment you want to monitor the work that is being done, already there is antagonism. So, most of the times, it is not a palatable exercise (Mr Kubheka).

Though such negative perceptions about class visits were raised but the implementation of this strategy could be backed by IQMS policy of which all major teacher unions are signatories (DoE, 2003). Therefore, the SMTs could arguably be expected to apply the strategy of monitoring teaching and learning through class visits without fear. In spite of the fears expressed by the participants but participants were also aware of the authority they wielded as SMT members in this regard.

It has been said now and again that we should monitor what is going on in the classrooms. We have been given the authority. Whether the educators welcome it or not they don't but at the end of the day it has to be done (Mr Kubheka).

So the main question to be asked can be, why were participants reluctant to boldly monitor teaching and learning through class visits? Direct involvement of the SMT members in classroom activities is clearly backed by the National Protocol for Assessment which is followed in order to verify progress made in teaching and learning processes (DoE, 2011c). Apparently, the participants lacked the guts to monitor teaching and learning through class visits.

4.3.6 Checking of learner exercise books

The purpose of monitoring learning was understood by the participants to be establishing learning progress and learners' levels (Du Plessis, 2013). This was done predominantly through quarterly tests and occasional checking of learner exercise books. Most participants regularly checked the learners' exercise books as subject teachers and not as SMT members checking the extent of learning in subjects falling within the departments they manage. Mrs Thwala seemed to be passionate about checking learners' written work when she commented:

I hate scribble, scribble. The teachers sometimes will not look at the handwriting. Then I want to monitor that handwriting. There are their notebooks (pointing at the piles of learner exercise books on her table that had been collected from learners for checking).

Mrs Thwala seemed to be even handed in her regular monitoring of learners' and teachers' work. In fact, both participants at Samela Primary School checked learner exercise books of their subjects and also those of other subjects taught by other teachers under their supervision. Hence, Mrs Thwala was quoted as saying, '*I hate scribble, scribble*', expressing her hatred of floppy handwriting when checking the learners' written work. The small pile of about 7 exercise books, which were coincidentally on her table on the day of the interview, provided some clues about her approach to monitoring learning and indirectly teaching through the checking of learner exercise books. On the question of frequency of monitoring Mrs Thwala confessed that:

I told the teachers that I can't check the workbooks of the whole class because learners are too many. But I will take three per grade every Friday in each and every subject.

These remarks confirm the observations by Archer and Brown (2013), who explored New Zealand assessment framework, that monitoring learning activities can be cumbersome and discouraging even to the SMTs. In this instance checking of individual learner workbooks was too much for the principal though the learners were few in terms of the school enrolment.

Contrary to monitoring techniques by Du Plessis (2013), checking of individual learners' work was, however, not common to all the participants. About what they do with individual learner challenges like lagging behind, Mr Kubheka responded by saying:

When it comes to paying attention to individual learners I will be honest with you. Time is not on our side. We attend to problems affecting the majority of the learners due to the remoteness of our school. We do have morning classes, we do have afternoon classes. Even during holidays teachers come to do catch up work on daily basis.

When the submitted documents were reviewed, the claim of conducting morning classes was not supported by entry times signed by the teachers in the attendance register. For instance, in a school which starts at 7h45, any teacher with a morning class would sign in around 7h00 or 7h15. Where there were afternoon classes, some teachers would have signed out at the earliest 15h30 if the school closed at 14h45. None of these times were observed in the attendance register as having been signed by the educators. It was not clear how either the morning or the afternoon classes could suffice considering the remoteness of the area and the shortage of frequent and reliable public transport as had been argued by the participants.

The difference of monitoring approaches between the participants from the two schools was obvious but the reasons for differences were not. Both schools were located in almost similar remote situation. Mr Kubheka's response suggesting lack of attention to individual work partly explained the reasons for his strategy of monitoring. According to his admission, they only focused on the challenges of the majority of the learners and not on individuals. Their responses seemed to suggest that the shortage of the teachers and transport was due to remoteness of the area. In addition, the HODs, and not the principal, were expected to check the exercise books of the learners taught by teachers under their supervision; contrary to the views of Olayiwola (2012) that the co-function of the SMT is to be instructional leaders. That is, the educators irrespective of their position in the school hierarchy, their main role is to enhance learning (Lambert, 2013).

Another informal observation made was that, contrary to assertions Clark (2007), the practice of checking the learners' exercise books was not a scheduled activity which was strictly followed. This view was confirmed by Ms Ntuli when she commented that:

I randomly check the learners' workbooks to monitor the amount of work given to the learners. I choose classes randomly and from there I choose five learners whose exercise books I will check, looking at the dates.

Mr Nzama had almost similar comments to make about the frequency of checking the learners' exercise books:

I do not have any fixed time frame of checking. I just do it randomly. At least once a month I must check.

It appears that the monitoring of learning using the strategy of checking learners work was not given serious attention. To some participants, it was only implemented as a postscript without an obvious time-table and procedure being followed. As a result, the implementation of this strategy varied amongst schools and individuals in the SMT within the same school. Serious on-going monitoring appeared to be conducted in preparation for the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and the final NSC examination. ANA was beginning to shake even primary school SMT members to get involved in instruction.

We come very early and leave in the correct time, unlike when we were rushing after the public bus. And we think we are going to do well this time. They can do anything they like with that ANA. I have taught learners. I even had time to revise. Ha..ha..ha [laughing in satisfaction], (Mrs Thwala).

Apparently, the SMT members had agreed on organising common transport for the teachers to and from school in the area. Their intention was to ensure timely arrival and departure at school in order to improve teaching. However, the focus of monitoring was on learner readiness for national examinations like ANA and NSC examination in the case of secondary schools. The monitoring emphasis appeared to be in classes that were going to write national examinations. Archer and Brown (2013) assert that in the context of New Zealand, enhanced performance in national and international examinations was firmly entrenched in school based assessments. If the participants were to follow the New Zealand example, the focus would be on improving learning throughout the grades and not only those writing national assessments. Du Plessis (2013) also argues that the monitoring of teaching and learning can inform the SMTs about the needs and the challenges of learners for which further strategies to improve can be developed. In the process, the SMT members could influence change in the form of enhancing improved teaching and learning while achieving other desired goals. Finally, the principals and the HODs could gain opportunities to appreciate strengths in teaching and learning (Du Plessis, 2013).

4.4 The SMT experiences of monitoring teaching and learning.

Participants were asked to talk about the support that they received from various stakeholders including the people whose teaching they monitored and those whose learning was being

monitored. While the participants commented on the cooperation of the teachers and the learners, they also remarked about the role that the parents played in constraining the members of the SMT from effectively monitoring teaching and learning. The views of the participants pointed to hindrances that were associated with the role that the teachers, the learners and the parents played and which affected the SMT monitoring processes. However, the participants acknowledged the significance of the cooperation of the teachers and the learners as well as the support from the parents and the community for the on-going effective monitoring of teaching and learning. The responses of participants are thus discussed under the sub-themes specifying the stakeholders to which participants referred, as follows: Experiences of monitoring teaching; Monitoring learning progress; Experience on parental role.

4.4.1 Experiences of monitoring teaching

Spillane (2005) and Lambert (2013) asserts that the role of a school principal or individual HODs is not to single-handedly lead schools to great heights. Instead, SMTs as instructional leaders are expected to interact with other teachers in their attempt to achieve the set goals including monitoring. Therefore, it was vital to firstly determine whether or not they monitored teaching as well as how they interacted with colleagues, teachers in particular, in such endeavours. Participants were asked to comment about their experiences of working with stakeholders during the monitoring of teaching and learning. The dominant view was appreciative of the teachers' participation and cooperation. The participants claimed that they were working jointly and collaboratively with the teachers. For instance, Mrs Thwala's comments were specifically about teacher support of the monitoring process:

I get good support from the teachers...The support is very good. My teachers are very supportive.

She went further to explain about the working relationship and trust they had developed with the teachers. Where the teachers could not cope with the work challenges she said that she went all out to assist. This is how Mrs Thwala put it:

I told them you don't keep quiet when you can't cope. Talk and we'll see what to do. I even help in Grade three with the handwriting, eh?

This was clearly an indication of the importance of instructional leadership in practice on the part of the principal. Hallinger and Hack (1999) posit that learning-centred leaders do influence teaching and learning through their own teaching or through modelling good practice. Mrs Thwala appeared to be actively interacting with the teachers and the learners in

daily classroom activities. However, her response sounded as if the cooperation of the teachers was obtained more when the monitoring activity was directed at the extent of learning, and not as a measure of teaching. In short, it seemed like the teachers' cooperation was conditional to the target of monitoring; if it was directed at the learners, cooperation was high as compared to when the focus was on monitoring teaching. Hence, Mrs Thwala's emphasis appeared to be directed at monitoring the work of the learners which was easily obtainable from exercise books and indirectly monitoring teaching. As a result, her observation of weaknesses in the learners' work led to her developing some opinions on the teachers' lack of attention to learners' handwriting. Apparently, through monitoring the learners' work, teaching gaps were identified. Commenting on the same subject, Ms Ntuli also suggested that teachers had no problem with the learner exercise books being checked:

I randomly check the learners' work books to monitor the amount of work given to the learners. I randomly choose one or two classes and from there I select five names of learners. I check looking at the dates; when the work was written compared to when it was marked.

This strategy is in harmony with the views of Davis and Davis (2012) who argue that in order to determine the levels of teaching and learning, the SMT may have to randomly select a few learner exercise books from each class to check the frequency of written work given and the feedback written to learners. In the process of regularly monitoring the learners' written work the quality of teaching and learning can be enhanced. Further, the SMT could regularly conduct this exercise continuously throughout the year.

When it was time to directly check teachers' records, it was a different ball game altogether. Teachers had their way out. Apparently, the teachers turned the exercise into a paper filling process in order to honour the due dates and appease the HODs:

When they know that nobody is going to check, they don't record. That's why you find that most of the time when I am checking teachers' portfolio, you find that there is a lot of missing lesson plans. It is because they have not submitted. They have forgotten to submit during the course of the month. They will only remember when it's a day before submission date. That's when they start doing the lesson plans, trying to fill in all those lesson plans that have not been covered (Mr Zwane).

Such comments made me wonder about the effects of such teachers attitudes on the effectiveness of teaching. That is, whether or not the teachers' lesson plans were done after lessons had long been presented. Should it happen that plans were done after teaching had

been done, the quality of such teaching would be put into question. Other participants echoed positive sentiments about their experiences of interacting with teachers on task. However, the comments seemed to be introductory remarks which preceded the main concerns – teachers’ detest for the whole exercise of being monitored. Although teachers through their unions were supportive of the idea of monitoring teaching and learning, but they did not appear keen on standing at the receiving end of its implementation. Mr Kubheka remarked:

Teachers are cooperative just because they have no alternative. If ever they had a way out I doubt if they would give you the learners’ written work. They cooperate because there is no other way. They have to because the principal has requested that these be submitted to the office.

Although the submission dates were allegedly jointly decided by the teachers and the SMT members as a measure of compliance with DoE requirements but, more often than not, the teachers did not honour these dates. Even then, the SMT members went out of their way to cover for such teachers by actually trivialising the teachers behaviours of not honouring the deadlines; the HODs make feeble claims that late submission came as a result of the teachers ‘forgetting’ as other participants said. Actually, teachers detested being monitored and indirectly, objected to teaching activities being subjected to the SMT members’ scrutiny.

..To be monitored is something people (referring to teachers) are very afraid of. Frankly, they don’t like it. When it’s time for submissions they complain. If you say I want all the files. They go: Oh, next week (suggesting the postponement of the submission date). But finally they do submit (Mrs Miya).

These responses suggest that teachers did not willingly subject themselves to the SMT members’ processes of monitoring teaching and learning because of they believed in their efficacies. Instead, they cooperated because they were obliged by policies and other collective agreements of the Department of Education. Apparently, the teachers regarded themselves as experts in the subjects they taught and as a result, they abhorred being monitored. When the participants were asked to comment about the challenges they encountered in the process of obtaining evidence of teaching and learning from teachers, they mentioned the difficulties of having to go through teacher attitudes in order to obtain the required submissions. In this regard, Ms Ntuli commented:

Everybody thinks they are good teachers. No one thinks they aren’t. Everybody thinks they know.

This comment was referring to the attitudes of the teachers. In addition to being despised by teachers, the SMT members' monitoring of teaching and learning was blamed for causing tensions between them and the teachers. Mr Kubheka expressed his frustration:

The exercise itself sours the relationship because teachers do not welcome their HOD or their principal for that matter, coming to monitor what they are doing in class. Monitoring sours relationship between SMT and teachers.

The negative impacts on SMT-teacher relations associated with monitoring of teaching were implied. When the participants were asked whether they would rather choose not to 'sour relationships' with teachers and abandon the exercise of monitoring teaching and learning, participants responded:

Whether the educators welcome it or they don't welcome it but at the end of the day it has to be done (Mr Kubheka).

Ms Ntuli echoed similar sentiments in favour of going ahead with monitoring:

I'll do it (referring to monitoring of teaching and learning) for the sake of the principal or because I don't want to hurt my principal.

With these comments coming from SMT members, is evident that monitoring of teaching was conducted in an atmosphere where SMTs could not guarantee commitment of teachers to the process. Experiences of monitoring teaching suggest that this exercise appeals for decisiveness on the part of the SMT, particularly the principal, in order to be in compliance with the requirements of Department of Education (2011). The comments made by Ms Ntuli give the impression that the determination of the principal, Mr Kubheka to abide by policies appeared to be the driving force behind proceeding with monitoring. Ms Ntuli implied the existence of mutual support for monitoring of teaching between the principal and the SMT. Somehow, her comments did not convince me that she believed in the process of monitoring teaching as a management exercise; rather it seemed to be merely for purposes of compliance with policies. The SMT also carried a burden of finding ways to make teachers honour the due dates and submit required documents timely as proof of having done their job of teaching learners. In the process, it appears that the SMT members sometimes relaxed terms of monitoring teaching, arguably, for fear of 'brewing conflict'. When participants were asked about what they did to monitor teaching and learning in spite of possibly invoking tensions. Ms Ntuli responded by saying that:

Sometimes I end up unable to solve that issue but sometimes I talk about it. However I bit around the bush and avoid getting too serious about the issue because some

people (teachers) get easily offended. ...Because we are human beings we sometimes relax the rules.

It is obvious from the comments made that effective monitoring of teaching is partly affected by teacher attitudes towards the implementation of the very monitoring procedures they might have discussed at the beginning of each year. In spite of the claim made by the participants that the teachers were cooperative, their basis for this assertion was, arguably, based on the submission of required documents which invariably were ultimately received after numerous postponements. None of the participants mentioned random checking of the teachers' files as they did with the learner exercise books. Instead, with the teachers, submission dates were easily rescheduled to accommodate those teachers who were not ready to submit as agreed. The SMT members' experiences did not suggest that teachers fully supported the SMT monitoring of teaching activities. Frankly, the teachers detested being subjected to actual monitoring procedures. When monitoring teaching, the SMTs had to carefully work around the attitudes of teachers in order to avoid straining relations as alleged by some participants. In fact, monitoring by the participants appeared to be at the mercy of the teachers who yielded to the monitoring processes in order to merely fulfil the Department of Education expectations.

4.4.2 Experiences of monitoring learning progress

Monitoring of learning was also part of the experiences that were shared by the participants. The attitude of the learners towards the tasks which were given to them in order to establish their levels of learning was revealed by the participants. It must be noted that, in addition to being part of the SMT, all the participants including the principals, also worked as full time subject teachers. When the participants were asked about their experiences of monitoring the extent of learning on the part of learners, they responded:

In most cases the principal (referring to himself) is in the office dealing with paper work, phone calls, meetings and all that stuff. The people who are always on the ground to do the work are HODs (Kubheka, School Principal).

The comment by Mr Kubheka suggested that little or no time at all was allocated to the monitoring of learners' work given by the teachers. Mr Kubheka monitored only the work of the learners in his capacity as the English Language teacher and not as the principal and member of the SMT. Such an approach seemed to confirm the assertion by Bush and Middlewood (2013) that principals tend to spend most of their time on administration matters and less on actual teaching and learning. On the other hand, Mrs Thwala was keen to check

learners' exercise books but the learner numbers compelled her to do random selection of smaller samples. The same strategy of random checks was also applied by the HODs to obtain only learner exercise books. Ms Ntuli, quoted earlier on, also confirmed preference for the random checks as a strategy used to monitor teaching. Furthermore, the participants expressed concerns about a substantial number of learners who copied the work of other learners whose work had been marked correct. Implicitly, the SMT attempts to establish how much learning had occurred was sometimes constrained by dishonesty and lack of cooperation on the part of the learners. Mr Zwane remarked:

There are some of those learners who will always skip classes; those who are not going to do their homework. They will want to still another person's work and try to submit it in order to impress on teachers.

Similar views were expressed by Mr Kubheka who said:

If you give tasks to monitor learners' understanding, the majority waits for a few bright ones to submit. Once their tasks have been marked they all copy. Then the assessment and the tasks loose meaning because the purpose was to assess how much the learner can do in relation to the task that was given. You find yourself remarking the script for the fifth time because five learners were copying from the same script.

Apparently, the learners did not take school work seriously. Cheating was commonly done in order to remove tasks in front of them and pursue other interests. Du Plessis (2013) posits that monitoring can inform the SMT about the needs of the learners and the challenges that the teachers experience. When the learners cheated, this purpose of monitoring was nullified. Consequently, it became a huge challenge to determine whether the learners were learning at all and if they did; the challenge was to ascertain their levels of understanding. Mr Zwane went further to complain about the learners for the lack of focus on their part:

Learners are not focused. When coming to school, the majority of them, it is like coming to the social centre where they meet with their peers. Rather than give work back to the teacher, they give excuses like: I could not do my work because there were no candles at home; I was sent to my uncle who stays very far from my place. So I came back very late.

In such circumstances, indeed, the purpose of monitoring the extent of learning is constrained. Obviously, this is in contrast with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which embraces assessment for monitoring and reporting as a driving force for learning with the ultimate goal of assisting learners to make judgements about their own performance

(Department of Basic Education, 2011). But, the main question remains; what did the participants think was the reason the learners seemed less interested in learning?

This year, when we had this new promotion requirement of learners who had spent many years in a phase, we have, in our Grade 12, learners who are not fit for the class. When teaching takes place instead of being motivated they are just lost. They just fold their hands as if they are watching TV. At the end of the day they will be counted as learners who are doing Grade 12 at your school (Kubheka, School Principal).

Some participants blamed the CAPS promotion requirement which prohibited the learners from repeating more than once in a phase. Instead, the policy allows for the progression of learners once in a phase even if they had not met minimum pass requirements (Department of Education, 2011). Participants felt that this policy encouraged laziness on the part of the learners because they know that when they have repeated a grade once in a phase then they automatically qualify for progression to the next grade and they do not have to fulfil any minimum requirement for such progression.

The SMT members' comments implied that both the teachers and the learners had not taken ownership of their activities subjected to scrutiny. The SMTs on the other hand, appeared to merely monitor curriculum implementation simply because they are often called upon to account to stakeholders who are involved in the education which their institutions provide (Republic of South Africa, 2011). Middlewood and Lumby (2012) project the parents and the learners as examples of these stakeholders, at a local level. In order for instruction to be of high quality, like other valuable products in the cooperate world (Owens, 2001), the SMTs ought to become instructional leaders and effectively monitor teaching and learning in a distributed leadership fashion. The relevance of this approach is backed by Spillane (2005) who views distributed leadership practice as a product of interactions of leaders (SMT), followers (entry level teachers) and their context.

4.4.3 Experiences with parental role

The participation of the parents in the monitoring of teaching and learning was minimal and sometimes problematic. At the end of the interview the participants were asked to comment on any issue falling under monitoring of teaching and learning which they felt was significant but may have been omitted by the researcher in his questions. The lack of meaningful participation of parents in the education of their children emerged. It was alleged that parents

did not set aside time to assist the learners with homework tasks given to them. Where they did, parents either did not understand reasons of learners doing these tasks or they simply turned a blind eye to the actual purpose of the exercise and just ignored the kids. Mrs Thwala expressed her frustration like this:

Parents can't sit with their kids and help them do the homework. Instead they write for kids. Ey! That is what I hate! You give the kid the homework, they (parents) write the homework with their own hands in order to brush kids aside.

The parents of the majority of the learners at Samela Primary School were themselves attending school in the neighbouring secondary schools including Lawuma Secondary School. The SMTs expected such parents to be able to assist their children when doing tasks given as homework, particularly because they were literate. Where the learners were given feedback on assessment conducted on them, parents ought to be informed so that they can be part of progress monitoring. Instead, they did not bother to play their role. Also, they did not come to school to hear about the teachers' feedback on the performance of their learners even when SMTs had invited them. Mr Kubheka lamented:

We asked the parents to come and collect the report forms of learners so that the individual teachers can talk to individual parents about the results of their children. But still five out of twenty seven learners did not bring their parents and did not give reasons why their parents did not come. Now, that should give you a picture of the difficulty of roping in parents to come and be of help so that this learner can pass.

The reasons for the parents not attending school meetings were suggested by the participants. When the participants were asked about how they involved others when dealing with the challenges they encountered during monitoring of teaching and learning, Mr Zwane responded this way:

We try to engage the parents even though sometimes we also have that challenge of not being able to find the parents. This is because when you write a letter to invite the parent that letter does not reach the parent. Learners simply take any favourite person of his or hers that s/he will find and take her to school. You find that that person is not going to contribute anything positive towards the learning of the child. Instead s/he will only be there to support (taking the side of) whatever the child is saying.

Although it was a learner who decided to 'rent' a parent to school but any parent who agrees to come to school in order to blindly take sides did not assist the monitoring processes which are meant to enhance learning. Therefore, some parents were not cooperative in monitoring

teaching and learning. In fact, some were willing to do favours for their children including taking the side of a learner against the teachers. Literate parents would go to the extent of literally writing homework for their children as Mrs Thwala complained earlier. The next section provides a detailed discussion about the manner in which the school context may affect the SMT members' monitoring strategies.

4.5 Contextual realities informing SMT monitoring strategies

The SMT members mentioned a number of contextual factors that they argued informed the strategies they used in carrying out monitoring of teaching and learning duties. Four main considerations dominated the discourse, and these were (a) The understanding of the concept monitoring and the strategy choice (b) Human resource capacities (c) Inadequate learning and teaching support materials (d) Infrastructural challenges.

4.5.1 Participants understanding of the concept of monitoring

It emerged from the data that the way in which one understands the concept of monitoring, particularly with regards to teaching and learning, will influence the manner in which one actually does the monitoring. The participants believed that the monitoring of teaching and learning was a significant approach to ensure curriculum implementation. In order to solicit the participants' insights about teaching and learning monitoring, participants were asked to talk about their understanding of the concept of monitoring and also establish the extent to which their monitoring activities were linked to their understanding of the term. This is how Mrs Miya shared her understanding:

Monitoring is about checking. It is about following people, checking what exactly they are doing in the classrooms and even outside; taking their work and observing how it is done.

Other participants echoed similar sentiments and these were congruent with those of Southworth (2004) who posits that monitoring involves visiting classrooms, observing teachers at work and providing them with feedback. The participants appeared convinced that without being monitored the teachers would not teach and the learners would not learn. Instead, they would simply loiter around as they please. If the teachers and the learners could not play their role without being monitored then that may imply lack of insight into the significance of monitoring teaching and learning. The participants, having made such a conclusion, others including the teachers and the learners, myself included, became keen in understanding SMTs' insight into monitoring. The participants were asked about why they

thought monitoring was important. All participants thought that monitoring of teaching and learning was a significant exercise. Emphasising the importance of monitoring, Mr Zwane asserted that:

I do believe it is very important that we monitor the work because if we do not, learners are not going to do work. Even educators too, to a certain extent, they seem to behave exactly like the learners. When they know that no one is going to check whether work has been done properly they do not do it.

All the participants felt that both the teachers and the learners would not do their work if it was not for on-going monitoring of their work that they conduct. In this regard, Mrs Thwala had this to say:

I think that monitoring is so significant. You can't leave people not monitored because you will be amazed. Learners who are given work without being followed would not write anything. When you take their exercise books home you would find no work. So we can't live without monitoring.

Mr Kubheka gave a summary of the participants' views on why they insist in monitoring teaching and learning. This is what he had to say:

Instead of sitting in the office being hopeful that there is teaching going on simply because there is shouting in a certain class, I would say this measure is a necessity just to ensure that you have evidence that there is teaching and learning taking place.

Significant as participants thought monitoring of the curriculum implementation was, numerous contextual factors impacted on the SMT members' strategies of monitoring teaching and learning. Those factors influenced how SMTs actually implemented those strategies. Among these factors shortage of human resources and infrastructural challenges was at the top of the list.

4.5.2 Human resources capacity

The data has shown that one of the contextual issues that influenced the choice of monitoring strategies was the availability or the dearth of human resources. The model that is used by provincial Department of Education to allocate teaching posts to the schools can be a major drawback which may result in the placement of fewer teachers to the schools with lower enrolments (KZN DoE, 2015). Such a model was developed by the then Department of Education at a national level. Based on this model, the final educator post establishment of Samela Primary for 2015 was five educators including the principal. The Grade R educator was the sixth in the school establishment and had an advantage of teaching only Grade R.

The documents submitted in order to verify the situation tallied with the situation in Samela (KZN DoE, 2015). All teachers, except Grade R teacher, had to teach multi-grade classes.

The situation was even worse for the only HOD allocated to the school. According to this post establishment a single HOD at Samela Primary was expected to supervise all three class phases in the school; the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase. The major challenge of such an arrangement is that the situation was seemingly setting up the HOD for failure since HODs had not been prepared for such adverse conditions. Often the HODs are prepared to manage one phase, in the case of a primary school, and one department in the case of a secondary school. These concerns were raised by the participants towards the end of the interview when they were asked to share their views about anything that concerned them. Mrs Miya raised the issue of frequent introduction changes in the curriculum while teachers have not been prepared to implement those changes. Bhengu, Naicker and Mthiyane (2013) acknowledge the similar concerns. Mrs Miya had this to say:

The other big problem is Grade R which is a new grade in the Department of Basic Education and it has different approaches of teaching. Everything for them is different from the rest of the Foundation Phase. Now I am monitoring something I am not even sure of. Therefore, it is not easy to follow them. How can I monitor teaching and learning in a class I cannot even teach?

The complaint emanated from insufficient training of the HODs in order to be conversant with multiphase monitoring plus the inclusion of Grade R as part of the Foundation Phase. Normally, an HOD is skilled to be in charge of one known Phase or Department but in this instance, it was not the case. Firstly, the HOD was in charge of all phases in the school. Secondly, Grade R was introduced as part of mainstream schooling when she was already part of the SMT. A huge percentage of the HODs had not been trained on dealing with Grade R teaching and learning. The training of the SMT members to cope with such a situation only came in isolated doses and the challenges of the process are huge enough to warrant a study on their own.

The other challenge was the teaching of more than one class by one teacher under the same roof, often referred to as multi-grade classes. Such a condition made a bad situation even worse for both the subject teachers and the SMT members. The weaknesses of multi-grade classes were shared:

If you look at our timetable of the multi-grade class of Grade 5 and Grade 6 you would think it is perfect. But if you look at it closely you will notice weaknesses. In a

one-hour period meant for Maths, only thirty minutes will be used for teaching each class. Where is the other thirty minutes? For sure term one work will not be covered in one term (Mrs Thwala).

In such a context only half the term's work could be completed in a term. In a year only half of the work would be covered. Implicitly, one year's work requires two years to complete. This scenario is already an indictment to effective teaching and learning. Such a state of affairs is obviously abnormal but since such classes were recognised due to the circumstances, then SMT members had a challenge of setting new sets of teaching and monitoring standards for multi-grade classrooms. For instance, in order to tackle the challenge of multi-grade classes, Mrs Thwala proposed aligning ATPs of multi-grade class to be carried through lesson plans addressing common themes. For instance, if during a certain week percentages were to be taught in Grade 4, then a similar Grade 5 theme was brought forward to that week; even though content levels differed. Mrs Thwala shared her advice to other teachers of such classes by saying:

If there are fractions this term in Grade 4 and in Grade 5 percentages are in the following term, I will bring Grade 5 percentages to this term; so that I will be able to introduce fractions in Grade 4. Meantime for Grade 5 it is a revision lesson in preparation for percentages.

This was done in order to ease teaching and indirectly monitoring of multi-grade teaching. However, such decisions contradict the policy guidelines of the Department of Education such as one annual teaching plan for each grade countrywide. Moreover, the approach of Mrs Thwala did not guarantee content completion as prescribed in Grade 4 and Grade 5 classes respectively. Nevertheless, what the data is telling us is that there were contextual factors that considered in designing the monitoring of teaching tools. The participants appeared to have a set of rules that are applied in multi-grade classes but not in others. Lagging behind was tolerated in such classes while another set of rules was applied in single grade classes. When Mrs Thwala was asked about what they did to address the situation of classes lagging behind. She responded by saying that:

We try to assist the educator (who is not teaching a multi-grade class) and ask what has kept her behind because she is not multi-grading, like us.

The above comment suggests that falling behind was tolerable in multi-grade classes but not in others. As a result no mention of catch-up classes was mentioned by any of the participants, particularly in classes below Grade 10. Morning and afternoon classes were arranged more often for Grade 12 only. However, if catch-up classes were not arranged in

lower classes, the learners would cumulatively lag behind until they rich externally examined Grade 12 class. Only then were the teachers circumstantially obliged to conduct the so-called 'extra-classes'. The major question that cropped up in such a context of tensions was on the steps that the participants followed if a teacher was teaching the ATP.

If he is lagging behind, I then confront, not the teacher, but the HOD to address the issue because he is the one who is close to the teacher than the principal (Mr Kubheka).

As argued earlier, it is evident that most if not all the participants seemed to lack the guts to address the culprits of non-compliance.

4.5.3 Inadequate learning and teaching support material (LTSM)

Sometimes the quality of teaching is affected by the shortage of resources such as the learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). Experiences of monitoring teaching and learning shared by the participants included the shortage of textbooks.

The shortage of textbooks is beyond my control. The educators complain that they only use teachers copy since learners do not have textbooks. As a result the educator spends more time making notes which makes things to go even slower (Ms Ntuli).

The small budget allocated to small schools results in fewer learning and teaching support material, in particular textbooks, being bought. The resulting shortages exacerbate the problem of poor quality teaching and learning since teachers are compelled to compile notes instead of concentrating their efforts on teaching. In the process, the pace of teaching and consequently learning becomes slow. The SMT members had to reconsider the amounts of work to be covered in each subject as well as set new time frames and targets for teaching and learning. In the study conducted by Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen (2010), similar concerns on LTSM shortages were raised. These shortages prompted creative SMT leadership undertakings in order to ensure availability of appropriate LTSM when monitoring teaching and learning. This was possible in schools with photocopiers and duplicating machines such as Lawuma Secondary School.

However, budget allocation curbed the schools from photocopying for the whole year. For an example, during the month of conducting the research interviews participants reported that the schools had no ink and tonner to print monitoring tools. The budget allocation for each school was less than R 95 000 for the year 2014/15 (KZN DoE, 2013). With this amount schools were expected to cover all forms of LTSM which included books, stationery and

desks. Moderation forms and other monitoring tools could not be duplicated due to shortage of stencils and tonner that was more glaring. Mrs Miya complained:

For these tests that we are writing, we don't have moderation tools because of the shortage of paper. We don't have monitoring tools for our tasks. The problem is also with the photocopiers. We don't have tonner.

In addition to being overloaded, they had to save the consumables when they become available. Apparently, this was another reason for not monitoring teaching on daily or even twice weekly. Instead, the participants appeared to be gradually moving towards monthly or quarterly monitoring of ATP. Notwithstanding these factors, the SMTs had to devise some means to consistently monitor teaching and learning. The intention of these strategies, like moderation of question papers and tasks, was directed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and not simply curriculum completion at the expense of quality. Linked to the challenges posed by inadequate LTSM is the challenge of the dearth of infrastructure which is the focus of the next section.

4.5.4 Infrastructural challenges

The data indicates that the issue of electricity power supply to the schools affected monitoring in some schools. For instance, Lawuma Secondary School had electricity power supply and therefore photocopying was not a challenge. However, the same was not true at Samela Primary School where they depended on the petrol generator in order to obtain electricity power. Sometimes they also ran short of money to buy petrol for the generator thus monitoring tools and other material meant to support teaching and learning could be compromised as these materials may not be printed. Mrs Miya responding to the question why they did not use the moderation form to ensure quality assessment, had this to say: *“The problem is with the machines (meaning duplicators and a photocopier). We don't have electricity...”*. The school together with the surrounding community had no electricity connection. The school relied on the petrol engine to generate electricity. During that time government funds had not been transferred into the school account to enable them to buy petrol for the generator.

Both schools had small premises. During breaks learners played too close to classes and as a result, the teachers had to put up with dust and noise and cannot relax. The shortage of specialist rooms was common. For instance, there were no staffrooms for teachers to conduct various types of meetings. At Samela Primary School teachers used their classrooms as

offices while a classroom was being used as a principals' office. The shortage of rooms could be part of the reason why they held fewer meetings than they were expected. For an example, only one copy of minutes was submitted as proof of meetings held by the department of science in Lawuma Secondary. According to their policy, they ought to hold one meeting monthly but that did not seem to be happening. Individual sessions with the learners or the teachers under their supervision were not conducted. This was contrary to Clark's (2007) cautions that policy documents alone are not enough if procedures to implement them were not followed. Moderation of question papers and other tasks given to the learners suffered due to the lack of policy implementation. In some instances, infrastructural challenges contributed a major portion to lax monitoring of teaching and learning.

4.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter data pertaining to SMT strategies of monitoring teaching and learning was presented and discussed. The analysed data revealed that there were gaps between the monitoring policies as espoused the Department of Education and their implementation in the two schools. It became very clear that various policies pertaining to monitoring of teaching and learning were in place but what was practiced was often something else. The data further revealed that the endeavours of the members of the SMT encountered all sorts of challenges from the learners, the teachers and even the parents. However, the SMT members covered up for the teachers and painted a rosy picture of the negative situation that prevailed on the ground. Often the picture did not tally with what was reflected in the documents reviewed. Lastly, the data also revealed that the monitoring of teaching and learning was a complex process requiring the members of the SMT to interact with and obtain a buy-in from other stakeholders in their context.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, the data generated through semi-structured interviews and document reviews was presented. Specifically, the previous chapter presented and discussed patterns that emerged from the generated data. This chapter presents the findings that are drawn from the data presentation chapter. Chapter Five begins with the synthesis of the study. That is followed by the presentation of findings on the SMT members' strategies of monitoring teaching and learning. The presentation of findings is organised according to the research questions. Then the recommendations are made drawn from the findings. Finally, the chapter is concluded by presenting the summary.

5.2 Synthesis

The study sought to understand the strategies that school managers (SMT) use to monitor teaching and learning. As a researcher in the field of educational leadership and management, I wanted to understand from their own perspectives the strategies that the members of the SMT use. Therefore, the first chapter provides a detailed explanation of the background to the study and also provide other aspects that are related to that chapter. The second chapter focused on reviewing literature on the study focus. That review seemed to suggest that where the members of the SMTs, the principals in particular, played an instructional leadership role by actively getting involved in day-to-day classroom activities, learning outcomes were enhanced.

The SMTs in this study were all HODs and principals who, in addition to being members of the SMT, were also subject teachers. They interacted with other SMT members and entry level teachers when applying strategies of monitoring teaching and learning. In support of monitoring, research posits that leadership is stronger when backed by data, achievements and other classroom dynamics. From the data generated from five participants, six strategies of monitoring teaching and learning emerged although the application of some by participants could not be substantiated through the review of submitted documents. The study confirmed the existence of useful policies which were not effectively applied in schools. The challenges affecting the SMT members' monitoring strategies as well as contextual factors experienced in small schools were presented. Shortcomings in post provisioning model used by the

Department of Education to allocate personnel in schools emerged as a major factor. Finally, recommendations made are presented.

5.3 Presentation of findings

In this chapter, findings which are based on the data that was presented in Chapter Four are presented using the three research questions mentioned in Chapter One. In addition to the findings, an attempt will be made to assess the extent to which participants adequately addressed the research questions. Lastly, based on the findings the recommendations will be made. The research questions which have been used to organise the findings are as follows: (a) What strategies do the School Management Team members utilise to monitor teaching and learning? (b) What are the School Management Team members' experiences of monitoring teaching and learning? (c) Why do the School Management Teams monitoring teaching and learning the way they do? Each of these questions is used as heading under which the presentation and discussion of findings are done.

5.3.1 What strategies do the School Management Team members utilise to monitor teaching and learning?

The findings indicate that there were six strategies that were utilised by the members of the SMT to monitor teaching and learning. These strategies entail the submission of teachers' files; learner attendance verification; moderation of assessment tasks; teacher leadership development; class visits and checking of learners' exercise books. Each strategy is briefly discussed in the next section.

5.3.1.1 The first strategy: Submission of teacher files

The strategy of checking teachers' files was found to be the common policy adopted by SMTs in their capacity as instructional leaders in both schools. However, it was found that submission of files to SMT was a mere compliance with departmental expectations and *not* the strategy they had internalised and also believed in as SMTs claimed. The HODs submitted their teaching files and also curriculum monitoring files to their respective supervisors. Principals in their capacity as subject teachers also submitted their teaching files to the HODs. This approach appeared to be an acknowledgement by principals that leadership can be shared was noted. However, the actual strategy of weekly submissions was not in line with purpose of monitoring daily preparation stipulated in CAPS (DBE, 2010a). In short SMTs had their own interpretation of policy. According to their strategy, all the teachers were

expected to submit their teaching files to their HODs weekly while the main purpose was to check daily preparation and progress on annual teaching plan (ATP). Obviously, checking daily preparation on weekly basis was a glaring contradiction. Daily preparation, as the name suggests, was not checked on daily basis. Delay in monitoring teachers' daily preparation implies delay in feedback to the teachers and/or learners. The significance and benefits of the notion of timely feedback shared by various scholars including Rhodes and Brundrett (2011) who posit that timely feedback is vital in preventing unintended practices was overlooked.

The other finding related to the submission of teachers' files is that the HODs yearned for the teachers' support by announcing days of submission early in the year. Others went to the extent of allowing them to make individual choices of the days on which they preferred to submit files. For instance, Mr Zwane announced the submission day, *"Teachers are supposed to submit on each and every Tuesday for the week that is going to follow"* while on the other hand, Ms Miya allowed each teacher to choose the day of the week. The latter approach was used as another way to solicit the teacher support for the exercise. These SMT practices were in harmony with CAPS policy which states that each subject must have dates on which some form of measurement will be conducted and the composite scheduling of subject evaluation dates constituting a school assessment programme should be drawn (Department of Basic Education, 2011a).

It was also found that the atmosphere of fear among SMTs to confront teachers. They appeared reluctant to make the teachers account for non-compliance with the agreed decisions. Although the submission policy was adopted in formal departmental or phase meetings, the majority of the teachers did not honour their submission dates. A day prior to submissions, teachers often asked for postponement of submission dates and HODs readily agreed to reschedule. In order to avoid breaking the 'team spirit' in the departments, the HODs in both schools went out of their way to cover up for the teachers' non-compliance by making excuses that teachers *"forget and therefore needed reminders"*.

SMT monitoring was characterised by laxity and lack of consistency. Although they expressed other reasons for this tendency, but fear for teacher unions was the common underlying factor interfering with principals' instructional leadership practices (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). Monitoring instruments which were designed to be signed, for instance, by the HOD and the supervisee after entries had been made were there to appease officials. SMTs submitted these instruments as evidence of actual monitoring, though they

had the signature of only the supervisor. The supervisee signature was missing in most forms. Also the dates that appeared in some instruments were not for the period that the researcher had requested. This left the impression that these instruments had not been shared with supervisees. Instead, they were specially prepared for submission to the researcher.

Also, the SMTs appeared to focus more on curriculum coverage rather than on the quality of teaching and learning. This was confirmed by Mr Zwane that weekly monitoring was merely *“to check the correlation between annual teaching plan, lesson plan and the work written in learner exercise books”*. No quality of teaching and learning was mentioned as part of items monitored on a continuous basis.

5.3.1.2 Second strategy: Attendance verification

The second strategy entailed the attendance verification and period register was used for this purpose. One participant specifically mentioned its significance. Other participants from Lawuma were not emphatic about the use of this tool. The period register commonly was meant to monitor attendance of both the teachers and the learners during periods. Ordinarily, the teachers sign it as they come in and out of class. They also record names of learners who are absent during teaching periods. Based on the review of documents, there was no evidence of teachers having signed in and out of classes. Only the list of learners who were absent on the stipulated dates were given. It was not clear how the list was compiled. A detailed discussion on this issue can be found in **Section 4.3.2 of Chapter Four**.

5.3.1.3 Third strategy: Moderation of assessment tasks

The moderation of assessment tasks is another strategy that was used by the SMT member. It was found that the SMTs in both schools appeared concerned about the quality of assessment tasks. The adopted policy of submitting assessment tasks and tests to the HODs before they were given to learners was discussed in **Section 4.3.3 of Chapter Four**. However, there was a discrepancy between the desire to uphold quality as expressed by the SMTs and the actual practice. Issues of quality were not fore-grounded as a significant aspect to be monitored throughout teaching and learning. Instead, it was set aside for times when tests were conducted as if it was used for gate-keeping purposes. Consequently, since effective monitoring remained in the SMT shelves, teachers went ahead giving the learners tasks that were not moderated. Mr Zwane’s statement that *“Sometimes HODs only get to know about the test when it has already been written”* bears testimony to this finding. Clearly, the SMT

members' application of the monitoring strategy to select programmes and not throughout teaching and learning made it to be ineffective and defeated its purpose.

The glaring absence of specific clauses to deal with non-compliance throughout school departmental policies, including moderation of assessment tasks, led to confusion among the SMT members. Consequently, it was not an uncommon practice for the teachers who did not comply not to be called upon to account for such omission. Often, it was not clear whose task it was, within the SMT, to take action against the culprits who did not comply. The SMTs had conflicting expectations for each other. The HOD expected the principal to intervene in his support where teachers did not comply. However, the principal held a different view on the matter. He believed that subject related challenges must left to the HOD contrary to views in the literature which show that where principals were involved in classroom activities, learning was enhanced (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010).

5.3.1.4 Fourth strategy: Teacher leadership development

The findings show that another strategy that the members of the SMT utilised was that of developing leadership among the teachers. Due to the multiple tasks that are carried out by the HODs, a deliberate attempt was made to approach other teachers outside the SMT to assist with some management duties. In order for this SMT approach to succeed Post level One educators, or teachers as they are normally called, were groomed into playing leadership roles. The SMT members adopted this leadership development strategy so that they could make up for SMT the chronic understaffing which they experienced. There were some cases where novice teachers who were less than six months into the teaching profession were asked to play leadership role. These teachers were tasked with monitoring each other's work and report to the seasoned HOD during bi-weekly meetings. This strategy tallies with the views of Frost and Harris (2010) who argue against preserving leadership solely for individuals occupying management positions of the school hierarchy. Instead they view leadership as something to be extended to anybody within the organisation.

It was also noted that the strategy of teacher leadership development had some mutual benefits in the schools. First, some SMTs had the number of supervisees reduced and consequently had more time to do justice when monitoring. On the other hand, the teachers who were chosen to perform management tasks got groomed for prospective leadership positions as full time members of the SMT in the future. Research acknowledges that subject

knowledge alone is not enough for teachers who aspire to lead successful classrooms and rise to higher ranks (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2012). Finally, SMTs collaborative work with teachers in flattened distributed leadership structures is seen as a major contributor to classroom success (Nicolaidou, 2010). The inclusion of Post Level One educators in the management positions is, in the context of this study dubious. It did not seem to be inspired by the beliefs and desires of the SMTs in the skills of the other teachers at management levels. Although this may be the subject of another study but it is worth mentioning that the HODs appeared compelled by unbearable contextual factors such as work overloads. Coincidentally, the approach was in harmony with the views of Poekert (2012) who posits that distributed leadership practice is constructed in the interaction of leaders, followers and their contexts in the execution of duties.

5.3.1.5 Fifth strategy: Class visits

The findings show that another strategy that was adopted by the members of the SMT was class visits. In spite the significance that SMTs attached to the strategy of class visits, the study has also shown that this strategy was barely implemented. The claim of having conducted class visits by some two HODs could not be backed up by documents that were reviewed. The review of monitoring tools conducted later showed that the documents they submitted did not have two signatures as required by policy. The only signature that was found in the documents was that of an SMT member who operated as a supervisor. Spaces where supervisees were supposed to append their signatures were not filled. The reason that was given by one HOD, Mrs Miya, for instance, was shortage of ink and paper at the school. Other SMT who had not conducted class visits at all and they cited various reasons which prevented them from implementing this strategy. Therefore, there are doubts about the authenticity of their claims about using class visits as a strategy of monitoring teaching and learning.

5.3.1.6 The sixth strategy: Checking of learner exercise books

The findings show that the sixth and the last strategy that the members of the SMT used was that of checking learner exercise books. Checking the learner exercise books was a common practice among by all the participants. However, most participants actively checked the exercise books of learners in their capacity as subject teachers and not as members of the SMT (principal or HOD). It must be noted that all participants including the two principals from the two schools were full time subject teachers although they were in the management

positions. The study has found that there were differences in the application of the strategy of checking exercise books between the two principals. Mr Kubheka confessed that time did not allow him *‘to pay individual attention to learners’*. Meaning, he did not have time to check exercise books of learners which he did not teach. Instead, he only had time to check exercise books of his English Language classes. On the other hand, the other principal, Mrs Thwala, devised some means to check learner exercise books every Friday irrespective of whether she taught that particular subject or not. She regularly took three exercise books per subject in a given class. Piles of batches of learner exercise books could be seen on her table each time the researcher visited the school. Sometimes she took them home for checking over the weekend. The next section deals with the experiences of the SMT members of monitoring teaching and learning.

5.3.2 What are the School Management Team members’ experiences of monitoring teaching and learning?

The findings have shown that the members of the SMT wanted to paint a rosy picture, particularly to outsiders, about their situation in the school. For instance, they emphasised that they received cooperation from the teachers. This contradicts some narratives regarding the submission of files where it was noted that teachers hardly complied with submission deadlines and did not account for their actions. The common comment among participants was *“I get good support from teachers”*. What the SMT members hardly mentioned was that the teachers actually supported monitoring when it was directed at the extent of learning, and not at the extent and quality of teaching.

Teachers were not supportive of monitoring when teaching was the subject of the scrutiny. As a consequence, teachers did not respect agreements where their activities were subjected to monitoring exercise. In response the SMT members would avoid directly confronting the teachers to keep the promise of complying with agreed deadlines. Instead, they opted for softer activities such as monitoring teaching through the learners’ exercise books. For example, Mrs Thwala and Mr Zwane checked learners’ exercise books, comparing the dates when the tasks were written and when they were marked. As a result, lack of emphasis in the monitoring of learners’ handwriting by Samela teachers was reported and only the principal took corrective measures. Unlike attempts to access teaching files, obtaining learner exercise books was quick; therefore, the SMTs often chose that “convenient” route.

Where SMTs attempted to conduct monitoring of teaching directly through teachers' written records, teachers often requested postponements. This raised questions about SMT claims that teachers were cooperative. It was concluded that SMTs had a tendency to cover for the teachers by giving all sorts of reasons for non-compliance, as presented in **Section 5.3.1.1 of this chapter**. The postponements allowed teachers some extra time to catch up on arrears, filling up the necessary monitoring instruments to be submitted. As a result the intentions of monitoring were turned into a mere paper filling exercise that was meant to appease the SMT instead of an effective teaching and learning monitoring strategy.

5.3.2.1 Experiences of monitoring learning progress

The practice of monitoring learning was not a uniform approach used by the SMTs. In particular, principals adopted individualistic approaches. For instance, Mrs Thwala took home three learner exercise books per subject per grade on alternate Fridays. She checked numerous things including spelling. Hence, she commented on how much she hated, "*scribble, scribble*" referring to illegible handwriting. Mr Kubheka on the other hand had no time set aside for individual attention. He expected the HODs to do that exercise. Like Mrs Thwala, most HODs regularly took random samples of learners' exercise books; check progress on learning. In the process they would identify some gaps in the dates on which the tasks were given to the learners and when they were marked. Again, the SMTs were not decisive when dealing with culprits behind such inefficiencies.

5.3.2.2 Experiences with parental role

The majority of parents were not involved in learning programmes of their children. Parents also did not attend school meetings even when were specifically invited to collect learner reports issued at the end of each term. In some instances, SMTs blamed the learners for those parents who did not attend meetings. SMTs claimed that some learners did not want their poorly dressed parents and sometimes grandmothers to be seen by other learners at school. As a result they did not give parents letters inviting them to school, but that is a topic for another study. Of the few parents that attempted to involve themselves in homework, some did not play a positive role. In particular, literate parents of children, for instance, at Samela Primary School had a tendency to literally write home works for their children. This practice defeated the purpose of giving learners tasks to be completed after hours.

5.3.3 Why do the School Management Teams monitor teaching and learning in the way they do?

The third question of the study, “why do SMTs monitor teaching and learning in the way they do?” was meant to establish the SMTs’ reasons for monitoring teaching and learning as well as for monitoring in the way they did. Most participants held a belief that it was significant to monitor teaching and learning in order to ensure curriculum implementation. They were of the view that without monitoring of teaching and learning, teachers would not teach and learners would not learn. The findings show that there were two themes that emerged from the data and were discussed in detail in **Section 4.4 of Chapter Four**. The findings demonstrated that there were contextual factors that influenced the kind of strategies that the members of the SMT used for monitoring teaching and learning. These contextual factors included the shortage of resources and other infrastructure needs which collectively posed a challenge to effective monitoring.

5.3.3.1 Human resource capacity

The few teaching and SMT posts allocated to the schools with lower enrolments was a major factor in terms of human resources capacities the schools had. According to the KZN DoE, circular (2015), for instance, Samela was allocated five teachers including one HOD and the principal. The sixth teacher was meant for Grade R only. The principal and the only HOD at the school had full duty loads like any other teacher plus the management duties they had to perform. Therefore, daily monitoring of teaching and learning in all grades including the multi-grade classes was a major challenge which virtually meant that teaching files could only be checked once every week. Even then, while certain sections of the files like curriculum completion and teacher preparations were prioritised, monitoring of quality teaching and learning was loosely monitored as a result of SMT shortages. The involvement of entry level teachers to play leadership roles was borne out of SMT understaffing.

5.3.3.2 Shortages of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM)

Inadequate number of books and stationery resulted in the lowering of monitoring standards. The sharing of books by two or even three learners retarded the pace of both teaching and learning. The budget allocation for each school was less than R 95 000 for the year 2014/15 (KZN DoE, 2013). With this amount schools were expected to cover all forms of LTSM which included books, stationery and desks. The practice of sharing books prevented the teachers from often giving tasks to be done by the learners after hours when those tasks

required the use of shared books. The practice of photocopying certain sections of a book was curtailed by ink and paper shortages at Samela Primary School. Such a condition did not assist in ensuring even the completion of annual teaching plans (ATP). Consequently, trailing behind was tolerated, particularly in multi-grade classes.

5.3.3.3 Infrastructural challenges

In both schools there were no staffrooms for the teachers. Even the SMT members did not have specialised rooms and offices that could accommodate departmental meetings. It was a challenge to hold regular meetings to review policies during school hours without being disrupted by the learners. For instance, at Lawuma Secondary School, a classroom was used as the principal's office which he shared with the administration clerk. That could be the reason for not holding regular departmental meetings. The copy of minutes and attendance register submitted on behalf of the department as proof of meetings held had names of people who had left the institution. This implied that the meeting to adopt the departmental policy was last held during the previous year. Staff meetings were not held regularly.

The lack of electricity connection at Samela Primary School hindered the duplication of assessment tasks and other monitoring instruments. It was difficult to arrive at any finding regarding reasons as to why after some weeks they did not have completed tools to show that monitoring had occurred. It was not clear whether it was problems with the electricity generator or it was mere complacency.

5.4 Overview of the findings

The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies which SMTs utilised to monitor teaching and learning. The assumption was that they had strategies of monitoring instruction. Indeed it was clear that the SMTs had strategies of monitoring teaching and learning, hence the six strategies discussed in **Section 4.3 of Chapter Four**. However, it was established that although these strategies had been adopted by all teachers they were shy of effective implementation. For instance, the policy of using a periodic register to monitor attendance which SMTs claimed to use appeared to be a useful strategy. Unfortunately, its application could not be substantiated. In fact, the submission of a periodic register from a period which was not requested was a clear indication that the strategy was not consistently used.

It was also glaring that SMTs were not decisive in their application of the monitoring strategies. HODs in particular freely accepted postponement of submission dates when teachers felt like they were not ready. Consequently, agreed policies were rendered ineffective due to laxity of their implementation. The study also sought to unpack the SMT experiences of monitoring instruction. In this regard numerous challenges were revealed. The major one being teachers' detest for monitoring especially when it was directed at the extent and quality of teaching. Mr Kubheka summarised the SMTs' observations when he said, *"Monitoring sours the relationship between SMT and teachers"*. This appears to be the reason why HODs and principals were not eager to confront teachers who did not comply with policies. The principal expected the HODs to take action and vice-versa. No one was willing to exercise authority. Although this was not the case in the primary school but it was glaring in the secondary school. Therefore, it is clear that if SMTs are to perform their duty of monitoring teaching and learning, they need to be reassured of the backing from the department of education.

Finally, the reasons behind the monitoring strategies and how they were implemented were explored. The main influence on monitoring strategies emanated from resource shortages and infrastructural challenges. The model of allocating teachers to schools impacted negatively on small schools. SMTs experienced heavier loads both in class and in their offices. The absence of deputies and adequate HODs negatively affected the active participation of the SMTs in instruction, even where attempts of distributed leadership were applied. For instance, if Samela Primary had HODs for each phase, Grade R would fall under Foundation Phase HOD. Instead, it fell under Mrs Miya, the only HOD at the school. Hence she complained: *"How can I monitor teaching and learning in a class I cannot even teach?"* Clearly, teachers' daily preparation could not be checked on daily basis where HODs had full teaching loads without any free period. The solution appears to be the provision of resources and appropriate infrastructure by the department of education.

Further, the sharing of books by learners prevents the issuing of daily work in certain subjects. The situation was worse where there was no electricity to enable photocopying of work for learners. Therefore, the submission, for example, of teachers' files on weekly basis instead of daily is understandable. Clearly, the department of education must increase school budgets in order to cater for these needed resources.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Monitoring of teaching and learning can inform the SMTs, the teachers and the learners about the strengths and weaknesses in specific areas so that these can be timely attended. For an example, conducting blanket extra classes for the learners on the eve of ANA and/or final NSC examination as discussed in **Chapter One** is seen to be evidence of ineffective monitoring of teaching and learning. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning ought to result in, among other improvement strategies, specific extra classes targeting individuals or groups long before the start of the NSC examination or any other form of assessment, for that matter as exemplified by findings in the NZ study discussed in Chapter Two.

5.5.2 Shortage of the SMTs in smaller schools is a result of the current post provisioning model which disadvantages schools. The department of education ought to reconsider this model. Meanwhile, SMTs can develop post level one educators to assume management roles and part of the SMT in a distributed instructional leadership atmosphere. This approach can be mutually beneficial to both the teachers and the SMTs. Teachers can be prepared for prospective instructional leadership roles in future substantive management posts. In the process monitoring of teaching and learning can be shared. Also, the SMT capacity can expand and individual HODs can be relieved of additional responsibilities.

5.5.3 Future research which is related to the topic can focus on the possibility of effective involvement of district officials in enhancing teaching and learning in small enrolment and often multi-grading schools where, if existent, HODs and deputies are overloaded as a result of understaffing.

5.6 Chapter summary

The study has revealed the existence of useful SMT strategies of monitoring teaching and learning although the application of these strategies had some challenges. The obstructions include teachers' detest for monitoring strategies like monitoring of teachers' files, class visits, submission of tests for moderation. Consequently, SMTs relaxed monitoring directed towards the quality of teaching but instead focused more on learners' progress. This was a major contributor to ineffective application of otherwise useful strategies. Implementation of strategies was often realigned to accommodate teachers' feelings. Further, the post provisioning model used to allocate teachers and SMTs to schools also proved to be a barrier

to effective monitoring. Finally, lack of resources made matters even worse. The department of education ought to allay fears of SMTs more by reconfirming their support for the leadership of principals and HODs in schools.

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PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY FROM KZNDOE



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubene

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref:204/8/342

Mr NM Mngomezulu
PO Box 54031
UMLAZI
4031

Dear Mr Mngomezulu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"STRATEGIES SCHOOL MANAGERS UTILISE TO MONITOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOL: A MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 02 February 2015 to 30 June 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehlogile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see list attached).

Nkosisinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 02 February 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel: 033 392 1004

EMAIL ADDRESS: kehlogile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubene@kzndoe.gov.za

CALL CENTRE: 0860 895 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: www.kzndoe.gov.za

LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Faculty of Humanities, Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Edgewood Campus,

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is MBUSO MNGOMEZULU, a Masters' Degree student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements in Education Leadership Management and Policy, I am required to conduct research. The title of my study is: **Strategies school leadership utilises to monitor teaching and learning in school: managers' perspective**. Your school is part of the population under the study. I therefore kindly seek permission to interview you.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as an opinion of population member.
- The interview will not last for more than 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information you give cannot be used against you, and the collected data will strictly be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate, or even to stop participating in the research if you feel like doing so. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research intends to establish strategies which school leadership utilizes to monitor curriculum implementation in school.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr TT Bhengu at 031-260 3534 / 0839475321. E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: P. Mohun, HSSREC Research Office,
Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I, JOHN DOE (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

[Signature]

11/06/2015

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

18/06/2015

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

25/06/2015.....

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I, S. S. S. (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

24.06.2015

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....
11/06/15

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. School principals have busy schedules but they are also expected to monitor in-class curriculum implementation. What strategies do you utilise to monitor teaching and learning? **[Probes included the following questions/issues]:**
 - a) Please share your views on monitoring teaching and learning at the school.
 - b) How is monitoring process conducted at your school and how often?
 - c) Do you have written records of monitoring?
 - d) Can you comment about what you do with your findings of monitoring teaching and learning?
 - e) Do you work with anyone in performing the monitoring task? Explain.
2. How do you experience monitoring teaching and learning at the school?**[Probes will include the following questions]**
 - a) Share your observations regarding monitoring processes.
 - b) Do you find any significance of monitoring curriculum implementation in your school? Why?
 - c) Comment about levels of cooperation and support during the monitoring process.
 - d) What challenges are associated with monitoring do you encounter and how do you overcome them?
 - e) What instruments/ tools do you utilise to monitoring-class activities?
3. Why do you monitor teaching/learning activities the way you do?
 - a) What would you say are main strategies of monitoring you use in your school?
 - b) Why did you choose/prefer these strategies?
 - c) How do teachers feel about implementation of the monitoring strategies?
4. **Before we end this conversation, is there anything that you would like to share with me that I may not have asked you about? Please feel free to share it with me!**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me!!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

5. School HODs have busy schedules but they are also expected to monitor in-class curriculum implementation. What strategies do you utilise to monitor teaching and learning? **[Probes will include the following questions/issues]:**
 - f) Please share your views on monitoring teaching and learning at the school.
 - g) How is monitoring process conducted at your school and how often?
 - h) Do you have written records of monitoring?
 - i) Can you comment about what you do with your findings of monitoring teaching and learning?
 - j) Do you work with anyone in performing the monitoring task? Explain.
6. How do you experience monitoring teaching and learning at the school?**[Probes will include the following questions]**
 - f) Share your observations regarding monitoring processes.
 - g) Do you find any significance of monitoring curriculum implementation in your school? Why?
 - h) Comment about levels of cooperation and support during the monitoring process.
 - i) What challenges are associated with monitoring do you encounter and how do you overcome them?
 - j) What instruments/ tools do you utilise to monitor-in-class activities?
7. Why do you monitor teaching/learning activities the way you do?
 - d) What would you say are main strategies of monitoring you use in your school?
 - e) Why did you choose/prefer these strategies?
 - f) How do teachers feel about implementation of the monitoring strategies?
8. **Before we end this conversation, is there anything that you would like to share with me that I may not have asked you about? Please feel free to share it with me!**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me!!

Originality

GradeMark

PeerMark

Strategies school leadership utilises to monitor teaching and learning: Managers'

BY N.M. MNGOMEZULU



influence which the SMT wields is directed at learning via teachers. In the study the concept of leadership is used in an inclusive sense as presented by Bhengu and Gounder (2014) and is further explained below where the definitions of concepts are presented. The objective of the study is to explore the leadership practice of school managers (principal and HODs) as a product of interacting with each other, entry level teachers and school contexts when monitoring in-class activities. The research is a case study that was conducted in two rural schools, comprising a secondary and a primary school, in the Ilembe District.

In South Africa the job of the principal, as stipulated in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), a section of *The Employment of Educators' Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998*, is ensuring that the education of learners is promoted (Republic of South Africa, 1998). In particular, principals are expected to supervise work and performance of staff and regularly meet with relevant structures in order to improve teaching and learning. Furthermore, HODs are expected to provide support to the principal by, *inter alia*, controlling the work of the teachers and the learners in their departments (Republic of South Africa, 1998). This policy has often made the general public and scholars of educational leadership to focus, exclusively, on individual roles of the principal and/or the HODs as members of the school management team. However, Spillane (2005) argues that neither one of these school leaders can single-handedly lead schools to greatness. Instead, the focus should be on leadership practice and not only on individual leadership roles.

My informal observations in the Ilembe District, under KZN Department of Education on how the HODs and school principals perform their respective duties seem to suggest

Match Overview

1 Submitted to
Student paper

2 www.educatio
Internet source

3 Bush, T. "Ma
Publication

4 Maria Nicola
Publication

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Student paper

6 wiredspace.w
Internet source

7 Submitted to
Student paper

8 Grenda, J. P.
Publication

